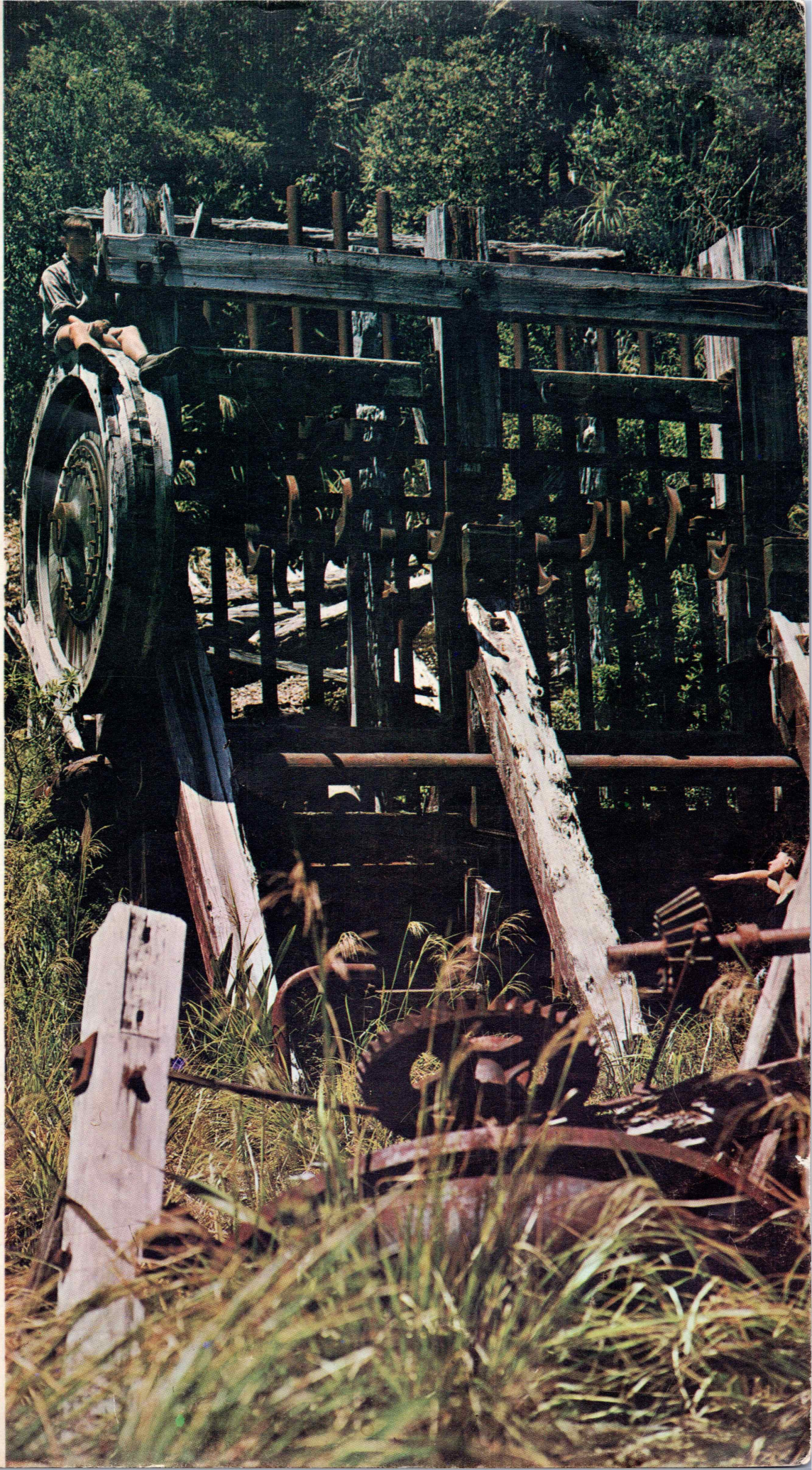


Centennial Of Blackball

1866-1966

3/- 30 Cents

*"Looking at the West Coast"
Series. Printed February
1966. Registered at G.P.O.
Wellington as a Magazine.*



BLACK BALL STORE

AND

HOTEL,

Foot of Black Ball Creek.

Miners' Tools and Provisions of every variety, and of first-class quality, at strictly moderate Prices.

EXCELLENT ACCOMMODATION FOR TRAVELLERS.

BUTCHERY AND BAKERY.

A Ferry Boat on the Grey River at the Foot of Nelson Creek.

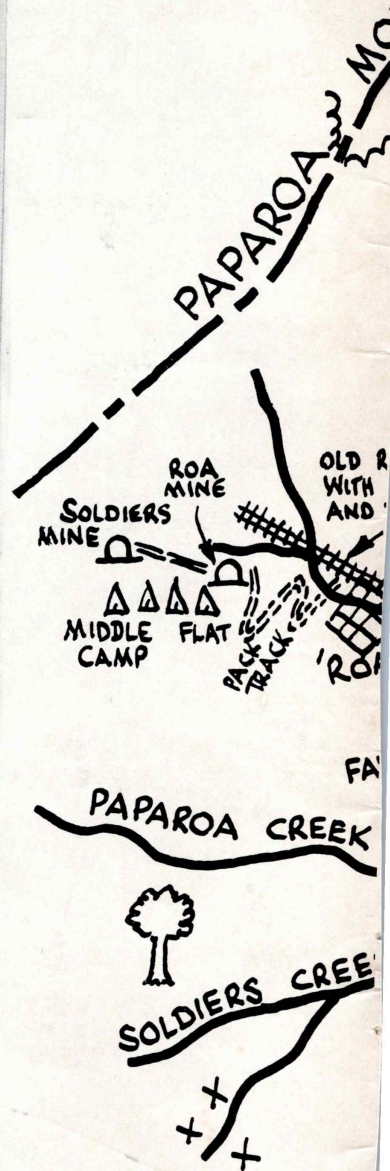
GOLD BOUGHT.

WILLIAM KINSELLA,
Proprietor.

SKETCH PLAN
of
BLACK BALL
CREEK.

Showing some
historic points.

Not to scale.



LEFT: This old advert is from an 1874 Grey District Almanac. (Greymouth Historic collection.)

KINSE
* PEAK

CENTENNIAL OF BLACKBALL

'Looking at the West Coast' series
Volume II No 4. February 1966.

Thanks to the help of many persons
- especially the people of Blackball
past and present - this magazine is
EDITED AND PUBLISHED BY

GORDON HOWITT P.O. BOX 321
GREYMOUTH. PHONE 7774.

Look for the coloured cover again
next month. Price 3/-.

Printed by R. Lucas & Son (Nelson
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the company, 15 Bridge Street,
Nelson.



RIGHT: Oldest living identity
at the time of the centennial
is Nanna Gerrarhty. The
daughter of William Kinsella,
she was born in 1875 at the
mouth of Blackball Creek.



FRONT COVER: Out of the past. A standing monument to the efforts of the pioneers is this quartz crushing battery still standing today. The pack track up Blackball Creek takes you to this 'Garden Gully' battery. RIGHT: At the centennial celebrations were Mrs Anne Anderson of Cobden (was at Blackball School about 45 years back) and Les Smith of Christchurch (born here before the turn of the century).



BELOW: Queen of the Blackball Centennial is pretty Mary Bryan.



ABOVE: The 1940s. This snap by ex-bus driver Bill Wilde shows school children ready to go to Grey for woodwork classes under Mr Fraser.



ABOVE: 1930. John Leitch's snap shows the rep. basketball team. Doesn't Mum look cute?
BELOW: 1910. Here's a snap from Tom Gilmer - shows a Blackball group enjoying a picnic at Ahaura after crossing the 'new' Blackball Bridge by coach and horses.



THE BLACKBALL STORY

The first explorers in Blackball Creek will never be known for sure - but read about some parts of Blackball history that are known.

In those early years the main centres were used as bases while diggers did quick prospecting trips up the main valleys. Thus it was that in July of 1865 prospector's working out of Blaketown (later changed to Greymouth following the visit of Sir George Grey) prospected the creeks of Notown, Redjacks, Callaghan, and Blackball. From that time until as late as 1937 the upper Blackball Creek has seen the diggers camped in its valley searching for the fabulous gold. The neighbouring valley of Moonlight was discovered early in 1865 when George Moonlight, travelling overland, descended from the Paparoas into the creek which took his name - here he found rich gold-bearing wash. There were many similarities in the the valleys of Blackball and Moonlight. Especially, that the valleys produced a similar type of gold - gold derived from the parent quartz, this was why nuggets were found early on in these creeks. In 1866 two nuggets of 78 and 79 ozs were found in the Moonlight; smaller nuggets in the Blackball.

All land on the north-west side of the Grey River came under the control of the Nelson Provincial Council until these councils were abolished in the 1870s. As soon as Nelson province realised the importance of the south-west goldfields it made efforts to establish a road or rail along the Nelson side of the River - but apart from foot tracks and the setting up of a few ferrymen this dream road never came into being.

The warden who controlled Blackball was stationed at Cobden until the 1870s when it was realised that Ahaura was better located to control the rich gold producing Grey valley.

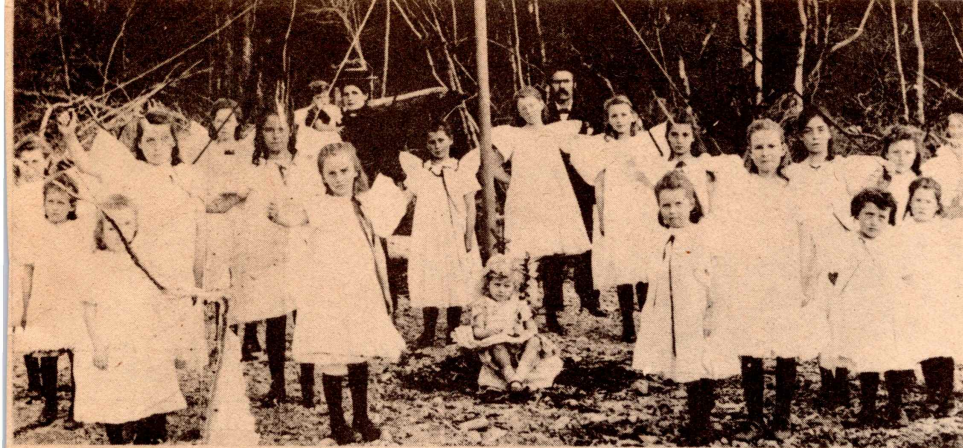
Population figures for Blackball in those early years appear to be more estimates than accurate counts. But then, with a population ready to rush from one gold field to a new discovery at a moment's notice, what could you expect?

YEAR ENDED

POPULATION

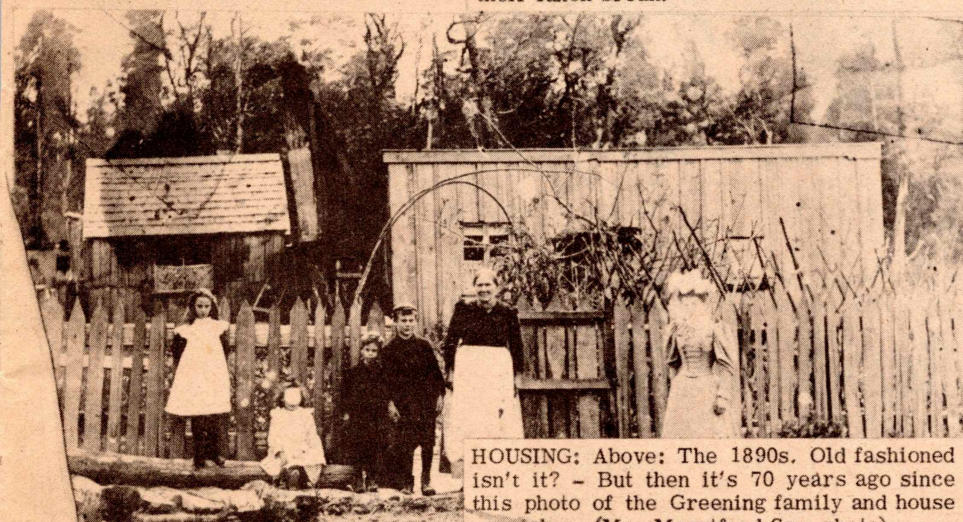
31st March 1866	Blackball and other creeks to the northward of the Grey River - 100. (T. A. S. Kynnersley, Commissioner).
31st March 1868	Blackball Creek yields average of £4 per man per week to a population of 100 and has two stores.
31st March 1869	Blackball, Ford's Creek and Moonlight, 80. Moonlight was almost deserted. (T. R. Dutton, warden).

Continued on page 7



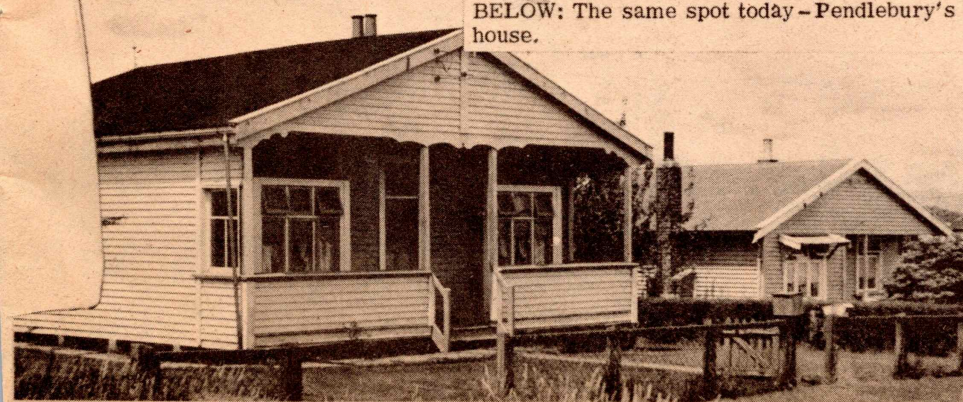
SCHOOLDAYS: Top: the 1890s. This photo from Mrs Mountford Sen. shows a scene around the May Day pole.

ABOVE: Today. Modern schoolgirls enjoy their lunch break.



HOUSING: Above: The 1890s. Old fashioned isn't it? - But then it's 70 years ago since this photo of the Greening family and house was taken. (Mrs Mountford Sen. photo)

BELOW: The same spot today - Pendlebury's house.



THE AERIAL TRAM

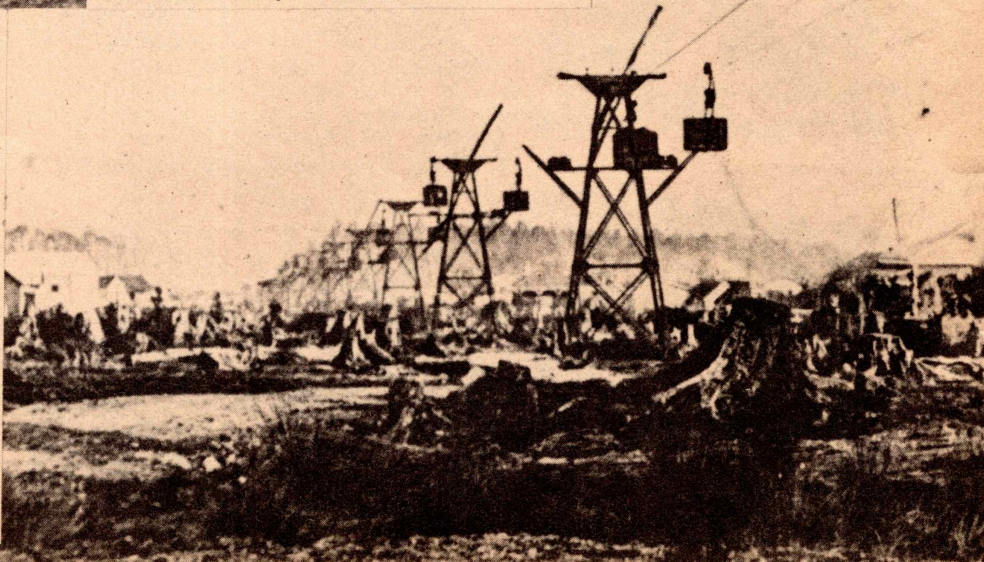


BELOW: From Mr Frank Thompson of Wellington comes this fine photo of the old aerial. The view is down Stafford Street. And today you can still see some of these towers that held the heavy cables aloft - two are standing in the swamp near Nga-here; one is used by the Kumara Fire Brigade, one by the Runanga Fire Brigade; and another by an Ikamatua farmer.

ABOVE: When the aerial had outlived its usefulness came a bridge and a railway over the Grey River. Although the bridge was built for both road and rail traffic, it was in use for some time for trains only, before the approaches were built up so coaches could make the crossing. In this photo from Mrs G. Anderson we see one of those early coaches.

Allan Brown recalls an incident which nearly cost his life.

'The stands that carried the aerial were about 25ft high through Blackball and, of course, across the lower flat they had to be 100ft high to bring them to the same level. It was when I was about nine years old that three of us, Eric Allan, Les Neilson and myself, decided we would climb to the top of one of the 100ft stands. We got to the top all right but then Eric suggested we should race down. I was first to reach the ground, because when I was about 75ft from the bottom I fell. Luckily for me, as I fell I hit Les on the shoulder and it was enough to break my fall and at the same time save me from hitting the iron ladder which surely would have killed me. As it was I only broke my leg.'



LEFT: This view looks along the aerial tram towards the old mine around 1908. The $\frac{1}{2}$ -plate negative was taken by Dr McBrearty and is held in the Greymouth historic collection.

RIGHT: He recalls the days of the aerial tram - does Bill McTaggart - better known as 'Tagg'.

31st March 1870	Blackball 40. Between Blackball and Langdons 20. Between Blackball and Baxters 20. Moonlight workings revived again. (J. Hendy Lowe res. magistrate and warden).
31st March 1871	Blackball 70. (Caleb Whiteford, warden).
31st March 1872	220.
31st March 1873	40.

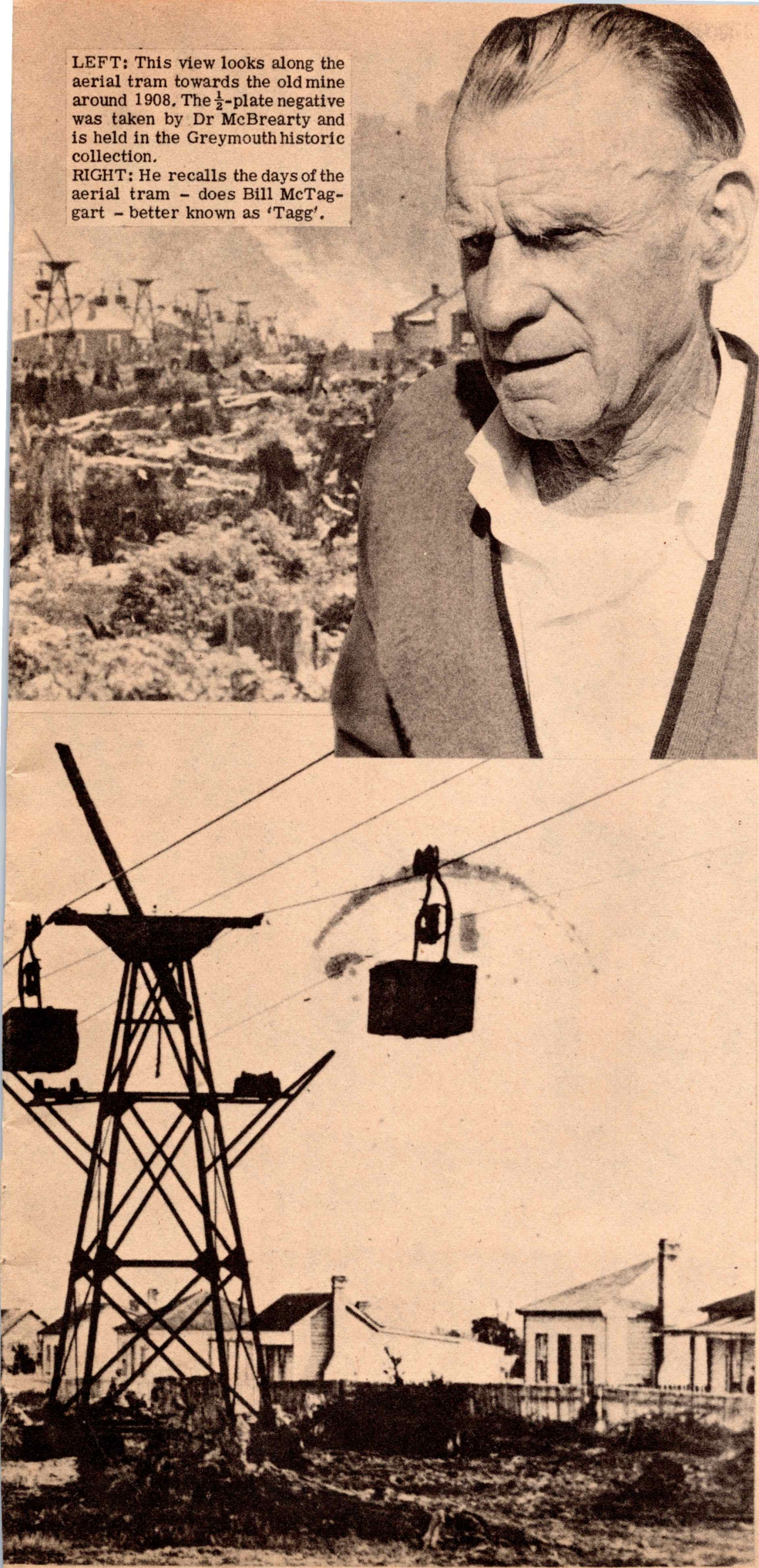
'This creek after having been deserted is again attracting attention and many are of the opinion that a small lead has now been struck that will be traced for some distance, and will ultimately lead to something better being discovered. A store having lately been established here, the miners will not be put to such inconvenience as they were formerly subjected to (viz. in having to cross the Grey River for supplies) and which was, I think, one reason of the place being rather hastily abandoned some time ago. I have been informed by some of the miners here that large seams of coal exist in the neighbourhood, but I have not had time to go to the spot myself, and therefore only speak from hearsay. I have however, no reason to doubt the report made to me.

Caleb Whiteford. Warden. (1873)'

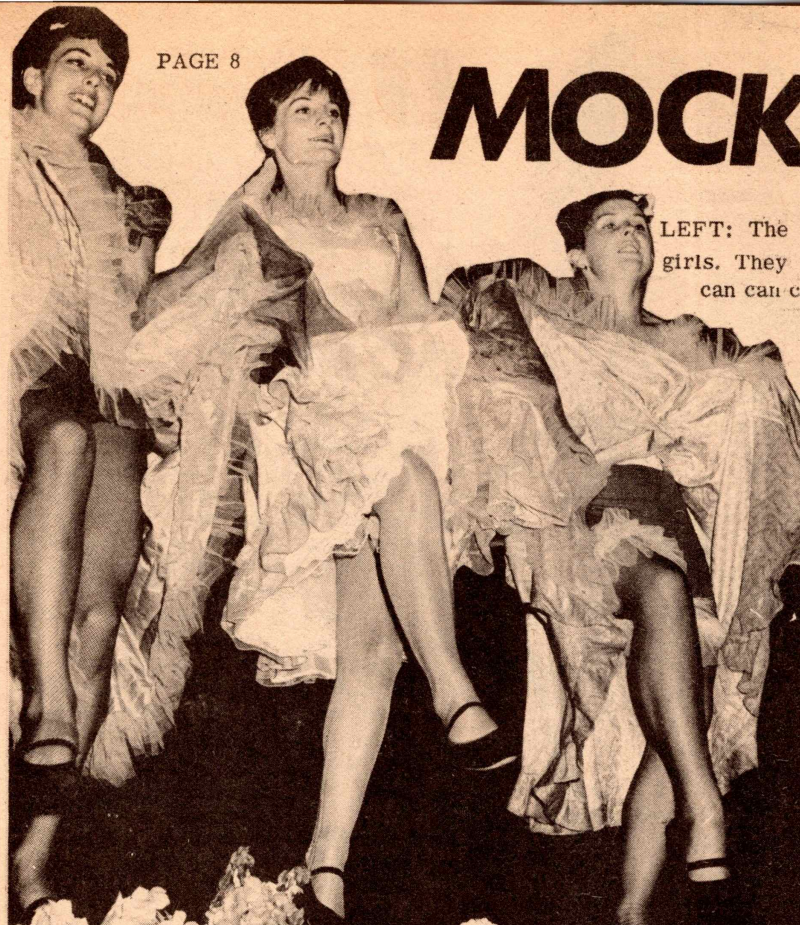
The new store referred to above was that set up at the mouth of Blackball Creek. In 1868 William Kinsella was married in Hokitika and moved to the junction of the Blackball Creek and the Grey River - presumably in response to the Nelson Provincial Government's search for a ferryman. At the beginning of 1870 he started up a general store and also the ferry boat, 1/- a trip. The building he lived in, with his wife and children, was on very high piles because when the creek rose it flowed under the house. Mr Kinsella, an Irishman, was originally a school teacher, and very good at mathematics. He adapted himself well to the hard way of life on the goldfields. By necessity he learned to do no end of new things - grew his own oats; had his own chaff cutter; kept his own turkeys, fowls, geese, ducks; killed his own bullocks; and grew his own fruit trees. Because of the good location of the store, William Kinsella became a gold agent for the Bank of New Zealand. The gold came from men of all nationalities working on the diggings at Blackball, Moonlight, Shellback and Caledonian etc. The Italians seemed to be in considerable numbers, while later the Chinese (known as John) worked a lot of ground in Ford's Creek and upper Blackball.

At the time that W. Kinsella was establishing his store (1868-70), many miners were turning their thoughts and activities towards locating the quartz reefs at the head of Blackball and Moonlight Creeks. The wardens report at 31/3/1869 tells us 'There is a probability of Moonlight quartz being worked - a ton was sent to Melbourne and though the yield was not so rich as anticipated (24 dwts/ton), application has been made for lease of a

Continued on page 9



MOCK COURT



LEFT: The 'can-can' girls. They really can can can!



Some who lived around Blackball have interesting memories. When Epp Veitch (now Mrs Donachie) was living at Middle Camp

'We took a hurricane lamp to school with us in winter. The teacher used to light it for us going home. When I was down last time I forgot to look at the domain. I remember planting the first tree there. That would be 1912. Arbor Day. Mr Wicks was headmaster and I had the honour because I was the youngest pupil.'



From a Blackball store in the tough old days:-

'Dear Mr Haisty, would you please give Phyllis 1/- worth rusks and 1 lb lead head nails as Dick has a weak stomach. Mrs P.'

BELOW: A fair cop to Brian Talbot and Mel Ord as another prisoner is caught. This one is Alex Bowkett - hard-working committee member once away from the hand of the law. RIGHT: Clown prosecutor Bernie Connors sounded just like an auctioneer - but there wasn't an auction near!



LEFT: And the crowd looked on.

RIGHT: Another well-disguised prisoner put up a good showing on stage - she certainly wasn't backward.

large area. And so in 1870 a Christchurch company placed an 8-head battery in the Upper Moonlight Creek, but the lode was not found and the ground was abandoned. Soon a lot of quartz claims were located between Moonlight and the 10 Mile Creek, but by 1872 these had all lapsed - no doubt the sudden development of the Reefton quartz reefs in 1870-72 caused this interest in the reefs at the head of Blackball, 10 Mile, and Moonlight.

The diggers of old, just like the workers of today, liked their beer, so it was not surprising that a hotel (of sorts) should be established in the Upper Blackball Creek at the Clarke Creek junction. This was probably one of the two stores which operated in 1868. Bill Williams was the man who had this licence for many years. In the 1880s or 1890s this hotel was shifted up the valley about a mile to a good open site. In about 1904 Mr James Haisty bought the licence in the hope of the area booming - but it didn't. So it was arranged through Mr Hargreaves of Ahaura for the licence to be transferred to another district - and that's how the Dominion Hotel, at Ikamataua, started.

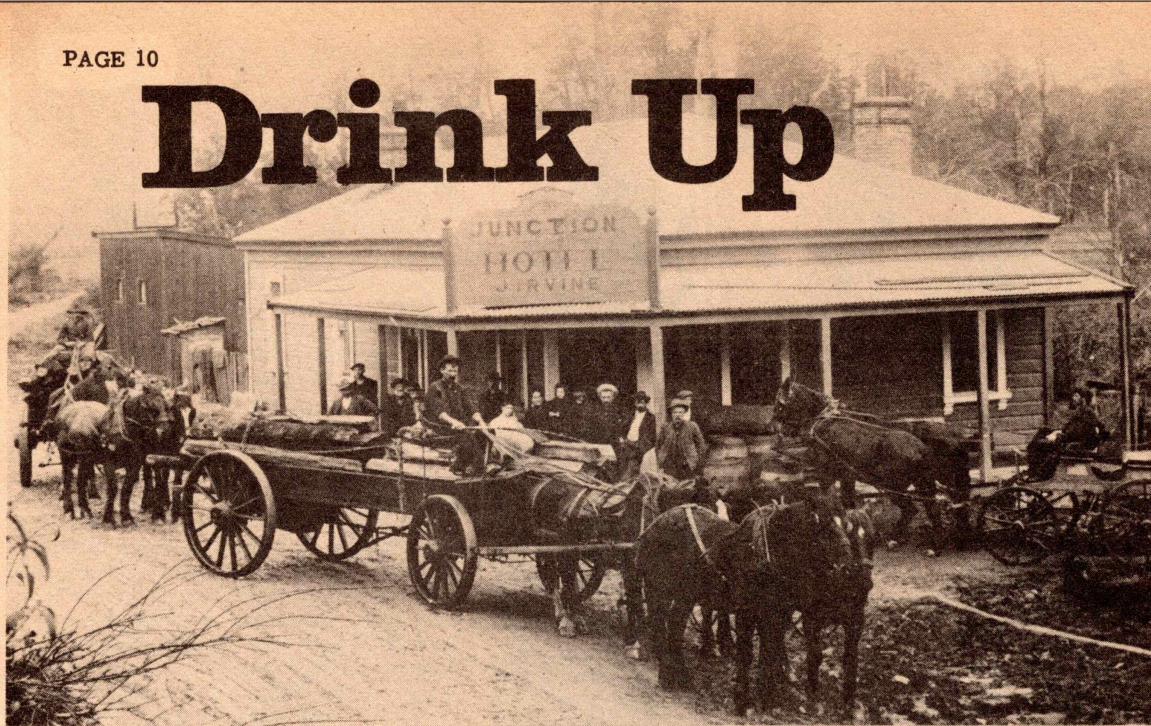
The 1880s saw the beginning of the present town of Blackball when both coal-mining and quartz crushing were established. William Kinsella's store at the mouth of Blackball Creek was headed for sudden changes as the 1880's progressed. Educating his seven children was a problem - one son went to the Ahaura boarding school; a daughter to Stafford School; another daughter to Barrytown for schooling; while at home was another daughter (known today as Mrs Gerraghty). This little girl in the 1880s was Blackball's first school pupil - she was taught by the first teacher, Mr Frank Grogan, who boarded in their house.

First big event in the 1880s was when a 21 year coal lease of 1914 acres was granted as from 1st January 1886. This first lease was in the names of Kilgour, Schofield, and Helcrow, but was soon combined and transferred to Wilson, Hill, and Bishop for the Blackball Coal Co. Though the Blackball Coal Co. carried out all production work, the land itself changed hands several times. First it was granted to the Midland Railway Co. (presumably as part payment), who used it as part payment to Sir Edwin Dawes, from whom the Blackball Coal Co took a lease. A dip stone-drive was begun in 1889 from Ford Creek and reached its objective, the Brunner Horizon coal seams, two years later, and 1250 ft in. The coal was in two seams about 6 ft apart, but only the lower one was regularly worked. This initial work was a credit to the engineering of Mr A. B. Lindop M.E., and the perseverance of major shareholder Mr Kilgour (hence Kilgour Road in Greymouth and Kilgour Street in Blackball).

Once the coal seam was proved, ways and means of working the coal and getting it to a market were looked into. As a result the German firm of Adolph Bleickert and Co commenced the installation of an aerial tramway the three and a quarter miles from the mine to the Ngahere railway junction. One of those pioneers

Continued on page 11

Drink Up



They liked their pint, they did. Those diggers of old; those miners of old; yes - they liked their pint. Mind you, they had to walk a fair way to get it in the real old days.

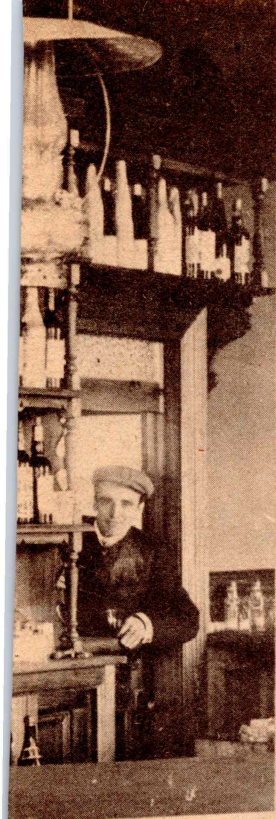
ABOVE: Folk such as Tom Colton recall quite clearly the days when Jim Irvine was at the foot of the Blackball Hill. This photo from Mrs Jossie Rathbun (nee Irvine) shows horse teams, outside the hotel, loaded with split beech mining timber.

RIGHT: The Dominion Hotel provides a background to this photo from the past. In the foreground of Mr H. J. Bailey's photo is the Blackball Pipe Band under D. K. Findlay. On this occasion the band played the ladies' hockey team!

BELOW: First hotel in Blackball town was Tom Jolliffes. His wife was an ex-West End actress and very popular.

With two little girls in white is Joe Thompson - next to the right are Rick Outram and Jock White. (Greymouth Historic Collection).



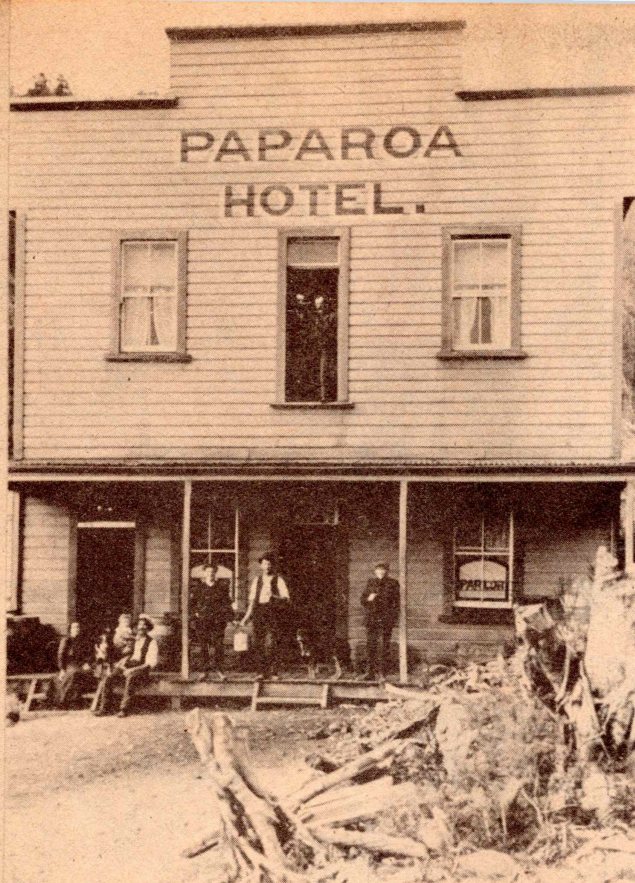


ABOVE LEFT: Jim Irvine inside the nearly finished Dominion Hotel. Notice the kerosene lamp.

ABOVE RIGHT: First hotel up at Roa was the Paparoa Hotel - run by Jim Irvine's brother-in-law D. Weir.

Years later when warrior Kells was publican there was a rush for his wonderful port wine - it was actually home-made blackberry wine several years old. (Both photos from Mrs J. Rathbun)

BELOW: Popular Blackball boarding house is shown below. First owned by Mrs Gregory (nee Kinsella), it was later sold to Mrs Gerraghty (nee Kinsella) who ran the place till it was destroyed by fire. (By courtesy Mrs I. B. Drennan).



Charlie Senior recalls a cycling race in Blackball around 1910. This one was a professional race to Ahaura and back (about 20 miles). At Blackball Creek they would jump off and carry the bikes over. Placings in this race were:- 1st Charlie Strongman, 2nd Tommy Gollins, 3rd Tony Smith, 4th Charlie Senior. Also in this race was Tom Gilmer. Prizes were:- £5 for winner, then place dividends and a bike tyre for fourth. After this race Tommy Gollins won the Mt. Egmont race - but that's a long time ago, perhaps you don't remember.

Then there was the pay day the aerial broke down so Dick Stevens crossed the flooded Grey River hand over hand on the big cable to collect the pay from Ngahere, then return.

to work on felling the bush to lay down the plant of the aerial was Joseph Thompson, a well-liked citizen of Blackball (previously he was one of the first four men who wrought at Denniston Hill). This man was responsible for getting the accident fund started and was on the first school committee. Later he became under viewer and retired in 1914 with ill health. The aerial tramway, erected under supervision of Mr Gorner, sat on metal towers which held aloft heavy wire cables (still visible today). On these cables buckets of coal were hauled in a straight line, to Ngahere, where they were emptied into bins (the foundations are still visible by the railway near the hall) and the empty buckets returned to the mine. The scheme, designed to carry 50 tons of coal per hour, proved inadequate later on. This fact, combined with many breakdowns, saw its life end in 1909.

6th July 1887, the year after the Blackball Coal Co took out its lease, the Grey River swelled and swelled and swelled until the whole Grey valley was nothing but crazy water. This was the Jubilee flood and William Kinsella down at the mouth of the creek, was right in the middle of it. As the waters rose the family saw first the old dray and later the chaff cutter get swept away. Less hardy people would surely have moved to a new district - but not William Kinsella. When the flood subsided they looked around and eventually found a spot at the foot of the Blackball hill. More hard work, and by 1888 they were transferred from their flooded site to their new accommodation house and store at the bottom of the hill - this building was also the first Post Office as from 1st February 1888. Now they could sell stores and liquor as well as board about eight persons. In those days the diggers would come in, cash their gold, booze it away, then go back to their lonely work again. Mr Kinsella became a very shrewd gold buyer - he had to be. You see, two types of gold came out of Blackball area. There was the upper Fords Creek gold which sold for about £3/10/- an ounce because of the copper impurities in it; and there was the Blackball gold which sold at £3/15/- an ounce. The Chinaman knew all about these differences and would try to sell the poor gold as being worked from a good area - but the wide awake William Kinsella could pick the difference.

When Mr Kinsella's daughter (now Mrs Gerraghty) was old enough, in company with her sister or father, she would take the mail by horse down the Brunner track, across the bridge where the horses pulled the coal tubs over, and to the Brunner-ton Post Office. Some times they would visit Hayes Brewery at Stillwater and collect beer for their accommodation house - this would be in 10 gallon kegs, and one would hang each side of the pack-horse. An occasional visitor to the Kinsella home was the Catholic Father for the district. It was a special occasion when Mass was said just for their family. When the girls grew up a bit they used to go to Nelson Creek for instruction.

Then came tragedy to the accommodation house in the late 1890s. - Fire.

Continued on page 13



In the group by the hut is Syd Strong who was in charge of this relief scheme. (Photo by courtesy Slim Buchanan).



LEFT: The Garden Gully battery building in 1924 (Mrs G. Anderson photo) Compare with front cover photo today.

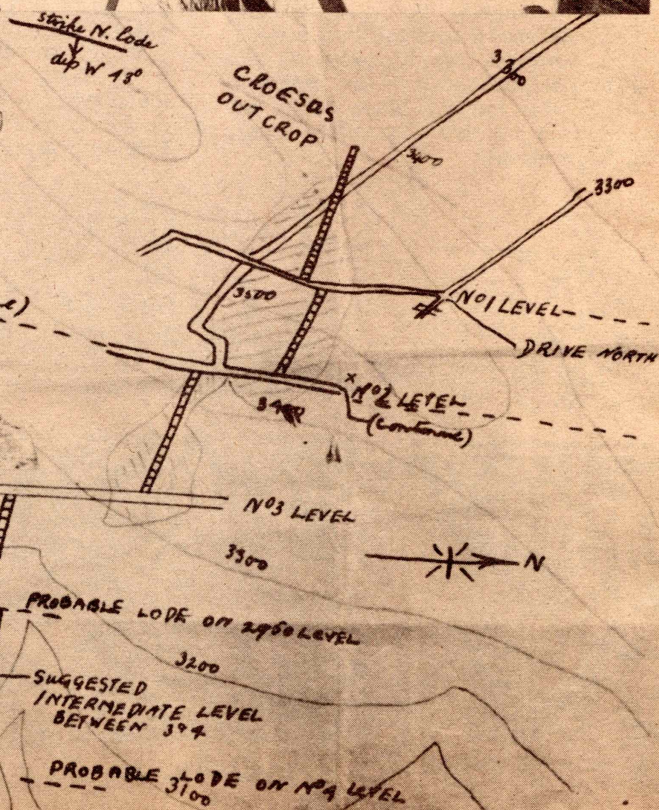


to accompany preliminary report
of examination.

from data

GOLD

No 4 Level (80' in H. Wall.?)



And so another move was made, this time into the growing township of Blackball where Mr Kinsella set to and built the Blackball Hotel. A re-built accommodation house at the foot of the hill saw people like Bill Sherman and Mrs Crawford before it came into the hands of Jim Irvine. The Hotel went out of existence when the Irvines moved into Blackball and built the Dominion Hotel.

As the 1880s drew to a close Blackball blossomed with a further discovery. Although the Minerva Reef had been known of for many years it was not until 1889 that it was found to be auriferous (contained gold). So it was that in June and November of 1889 21-year holdings surrounding the Minerva reef were taken out in the names of Gerald Perotti (two claims) and A. R. Guinness, James O'Brien, and John Scallan. In February 1890 the Minerva Gold Mining Co was registered and further areas were taken out. By 1891 a 10 head mill, or quartz battery was erected, Mr W. Kinsella packing most of the gear in. It would be during this time that the old diggers track to upper Blackball Creek was widened and operated as a horse drawn tram as far as the Hotel site. Returns from Minerva were 2470 tons quartz crushed and 775 ozs gold won from 1893 to 1896 and in 1903.

The workings of this company were on the East side of the creek so had to be carried by fluming to the battery on the West side. The power to work this battery came from a water race above the present track, down pipes and was so aimed onto a waterwheel. The quartz was fed into the batteries where the heavy stampers were being continually raised and dropped to crush the quartz into a fine sludge. This was then washed over the coated copper plates where the gold clung to form amalgam with the quicksilver. Unfortunately this method of winning gold was not completely successful - as much as 40 per cent of the fine gold was washed away with the quartz. Perhaps it is still in the ground around those old batteries to this very day. What about having a fossick for it?

As the coal and gold mining began to develop it was found necessary to install more ferries and later a punt across the river. These were run by men like McInnes, O'Brien and Ross. This last named was probably Jack Ross who had the only hotel at Ngahere prior to the opening up of the Blackball coal. This hotel came into being as a result of Ngahere being an important junction for shipping goods up and down the river. Ngahere soon developed as an important railway junction and had its own shops, Post Office, school, and of course the hotel.

But all the time Blackball was growing. What strange sights in the early town. A group of Chinamen working a gold claim; the clatter of coal buckets passing overhead; a string of packhorses heading up the valley; a group of miners - Welsh, by the sound of their conversation - heading home for a much needed bath in the old copper; two old pioneer gold miners sitting on the step of the only hotel

Continued on page 17



ABOVE: Operating a sluicing claim in Ford's Creek at Faversham in 1910. Part-time diggers are Jack Cooper, Jim Sneddon, Jack Muir, and two Blackball children. This claim had been previously worked by Ah Wee. This fine photo has been preserved by Jack Muir of Gladstone.

Old workings are still visible around Faversham today if you care to wander through the easy bush. The old gold claims up Blackball Creek are even easier to find - not even any gorse up there!

BELOW: Pack horses ready to leave 'Haisty's' shop for the diggings in the 1930s. Ces Mountford, 'The Filly', Bobby and Billy Mountford, ?, 'Peter Pan' (was like riding a camel), Bummy Kerr, Rab Clark, Johny Anderson, 'Saxon', Huddy Hudson, Jack Haisty and son Johny. (Slim Buchanan photo),





Miss Mary Bryan receives the Centennial Queen sash from Centennial Committee president J. R. Williams. Next came the crowning. Then the 12 junior debs were presented - they are Elizabeth Holman, Wendy McFadyen, Anne McGougan, Jessie Bryan, Annette McMahon, Suzanne McFadyen, Kathleen Maguigan, Judith Liddel, Ferilyth Neilson, Linda Lee, Catherine Liddel, Christine Kerr. In black dress behind the debs is Mrs Rhoda Liddel, capable compere for the debs' presentation.

CENTENNIAL QUEEN



LEFT: Page boys Mark Kennedy and Philip O'Donnell with the 'Royal' sash, crown, and scrolls (for those later knighted).
ABOVE: Trumpeter Ian Bryan (assisted by Des Adamson) and a good tape recorder, marked the arrival of the royal party.



The beautiful costumes and sound effects appealed to this crowd, especially the wide-eyed youngsters. Alan McFadyen of Blackball (above) was very taken with the show.

QUIET ——— HORSEPOWER ———

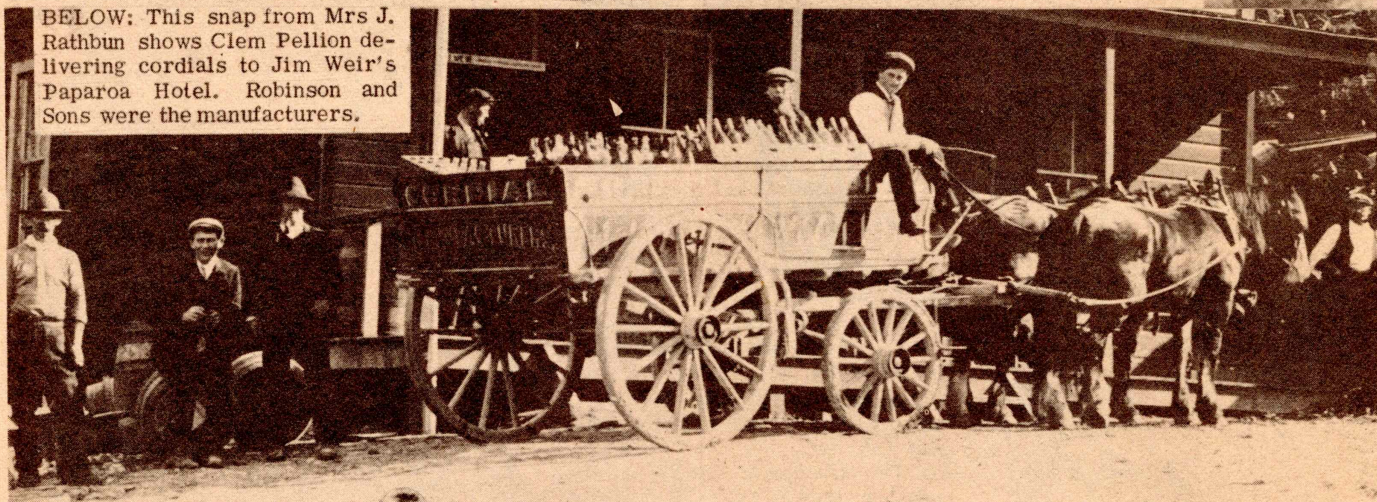


LEFT: An early Rugby football team moving down the Blackball Hill in the 1910s. Driving the drag is Fatty Rhodes. (Mrs Mountford Sen. photo) Charlie Senior recalls a footy match when he loaned his boots to miner Paddy Webb so that Paddy could take the field.

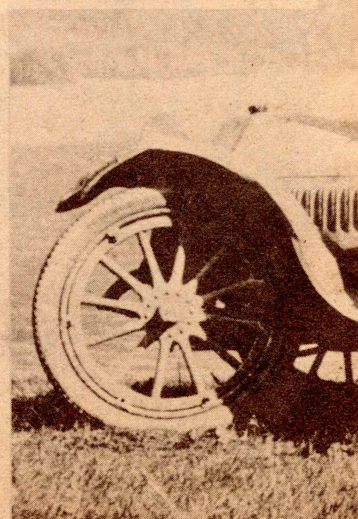
RIGHT: From Mrs Mason comes this photo of Stewie Kerr's well-loaded lorry in the 1930s. The group was known as the young comrades – guess the traffic cops weren't too tough in those days.



BELOW: This snap from Mrs J. Rathbun shows Clem Pellion delivering cordials to Jim Weir's Paparoa Hotel. Robinson and Sons were the manufacturers.



RIGHT: Bill McTaggart's 'Dirty Mary' – a 7-seater Studebaker. This shot, from Mrs J. Rathbun, was taken at Lake Kaniere.



ABOVE: Transport to the Upper Blackball has always been on foot or by horse. This snap from Slim Buchanan shows 'Volga' being ridden by gold subsidy scheme engineer Madriniak with Jack Tilly at right.

NOISY

THE BLACKBALL STORY PAGE 17

(Jolliffes) and talking about the tunnels they had driven from Ford's Creek into the gravels under the town. All the time there were huts and houses and tents going up, while buckets and buckets of coal came down. The miners worked hard and long to win the coal, working by the light of a feeble oil lamp; no smoke-oh breaks, just work-and more work; no hot showers after work but home for a welcome scrub.

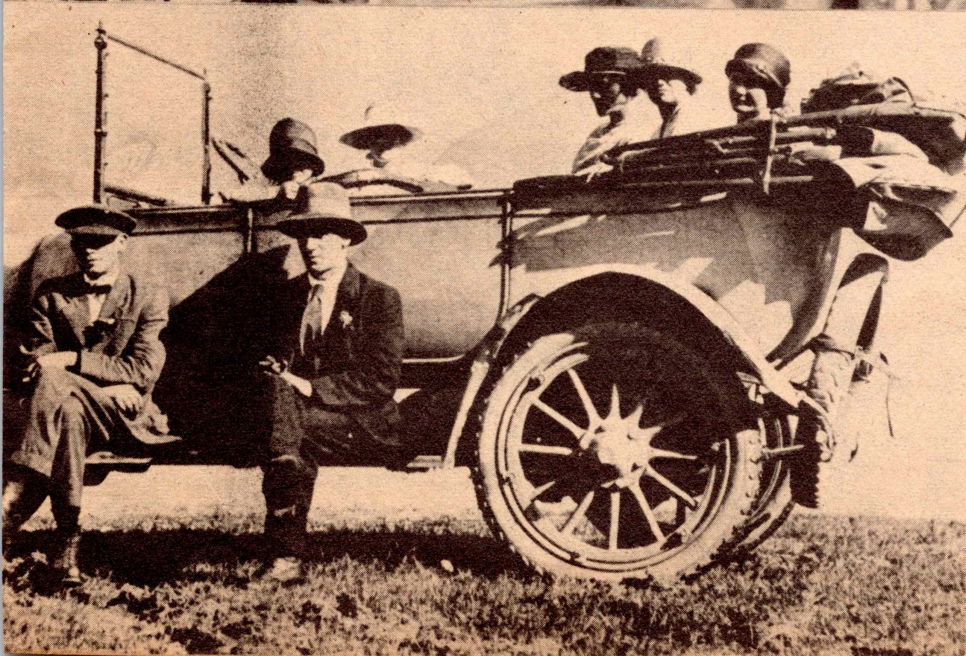
Household words in the 1890s and 1900s were a lot different from today. While the meal cooked in the camp oven or colonial oven several old kerosene tins were hung over the fire to boil, or the copper outside was lit, so that the bread winner could have a clean up before he went down to Tom Jolliffe's pub for a quick one.

Then came the rumour around the town of a new gold find somewhere up the valley. Yes, Henry Neilsen had located what is known as the Croesus outcrop. High up on the top of the range it was. On 22nd June 1896 a 21-year licence for 100 acres was taken in Mr Neilsen's name but in July shares were spread equally with a further 12 who would probably help to develop and work the mine - G. E. Cray, Donald MacGregor, Richard Green, Henry Dearing, James Barry, James McMiekin, John McKnight, Henry Bignell, Thomas Ponsonby, Earnest Graville, John Hogg, James Orr - known as the Croesus Gold Mining Co Ltd. By 1898 the company had purchased a 10 head battery from the Specimen Hill Co and erected it in Mulcare Creek (or the left-hand branch of Blackball Creek). From the mine up on top an aerial supported on pylons carried the quartz down the valley to the battery. For four years the company prospered as 2415 ozs of gold were taken from 3757 tons of quartz. In 1902 the company was reconstructed as the Mount Pararoa Co but only won 242 ozs from 1000 tons. Then in 1904 the claim and plant were bought by the Garden Gully Goldmining Co. The battery and some of the aerial was shifted into Dugout Creek, a small trickle into Roaring Meg which joins Moonlight Creek well down. This battery is still there today (see photo on front cover) for all to see.

Although the quartz in Garden Gully was first prospected in 1897 the company was not formed till August 1901. Unfortunately the quartz was of a very low grade and the battery only crushed for a short time before the company went into liquidation and set up a new company called The Croesus Mines Ltd. Their objective was to re-open the old Croesus mine, presumably in an effort to pay the shareholders for their heavy expenses in the Garden Gully venture. This company only survived till August 1913 when liquidation was the only course left. Mind you, from all the plans, reports, and conversations with oldtimers, there's still a lot of gold up top there? A fourth quartz battery and said to be the richest, was also worked from Blackball. This was the "Taffy". Prospected in 1897 at the head of the 10 Mile (just over the ridge from the Blackball Creek) it was rich enough to warrant crushing by hand in mortars. The company was registered

Continued on page 19

BELOW: Around 1920. Tom Gilmer's Model 'T' (with self starter). Cost about £300 - spare tyre extra. Bought off Mark Sprott and Co, this was one of Blackball's early taxis. This snap from Tom Gilmer shows himself and Rita McCallum.



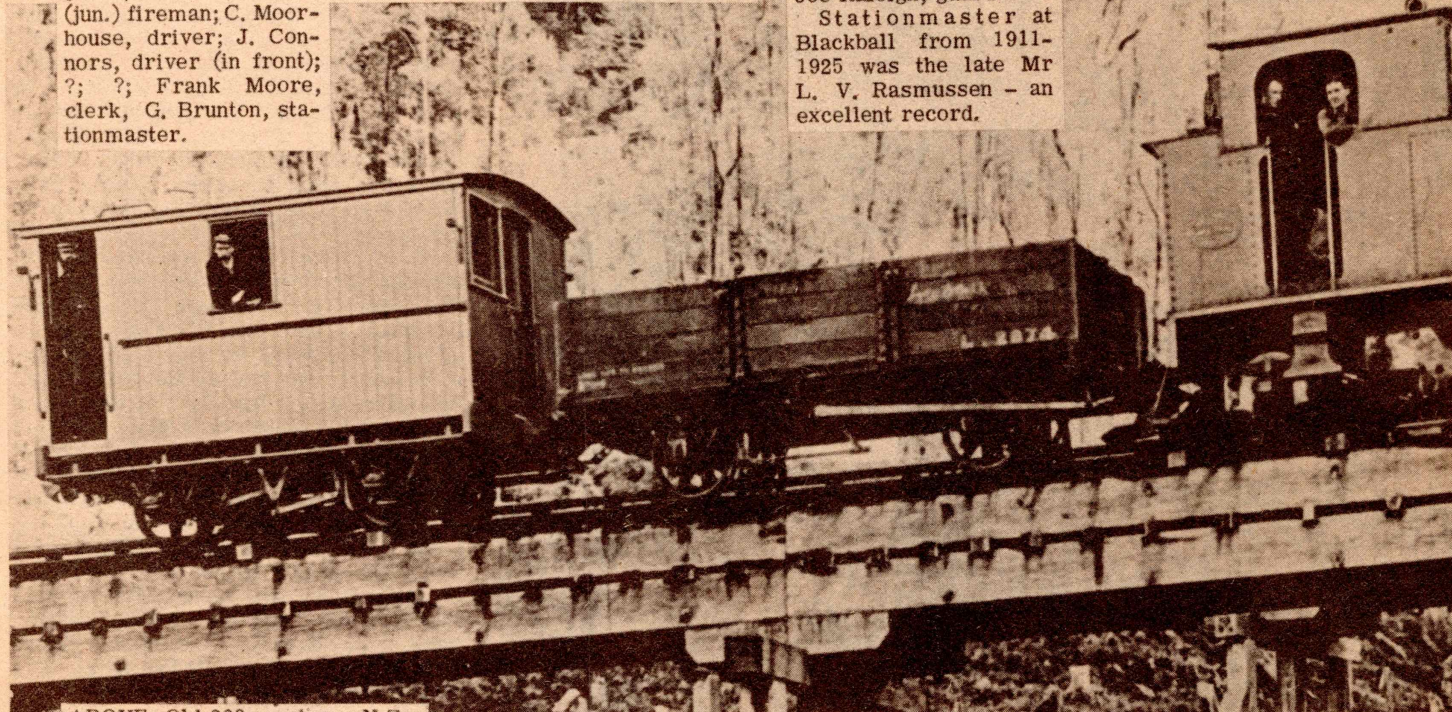


ABOVE: Blackball's railway staff of 1927. T. Lamberton (sen.) guard; T. Lamberton (jun.) fireman; C. Moorhouse, driver; J. Connors, driver (in front); ?; ?; Frank Moore, clerk, G. Brunton, stationmaster.



ABOVE: An unusual photo (from Tom Gilmer) of the first station staff in 1910. George Wheatley, fireman; Jack Molloy, clerk; Harry Smith, engine driver; Bob Carruthers, fireman; Joe Packer, driver; Joe Raleigh, guard.

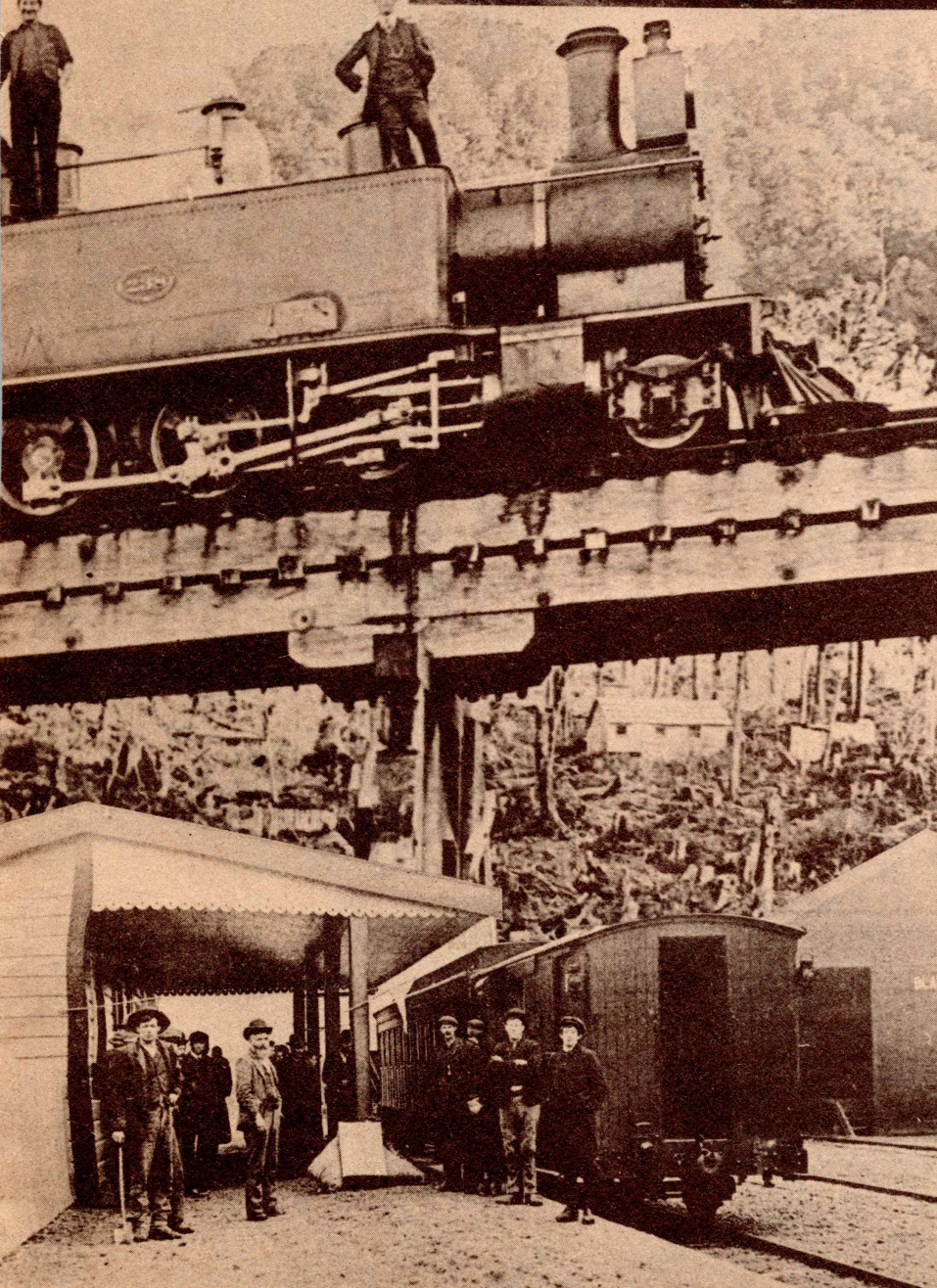
Stationmaster at Blackball from 1911-1925 was the late Mr L. V. Rasmussen - an excellent record.



ABOVE: Old 238 moving up N.Z.s steepest centre-rail railway. In the 1910s Roa was still surrounded by green bush and standing burnt stumps (by courtesy H. T. Rasmussen of Hornby). At far left in door of brake van is Mr L. V. Rasmussen, stationmaster. RIGHT: In this view, from Mrs G. Anderson, you see a gang working on the big railway cutting near Blackball Creek (J. Ring photo) A smithy used to have his forge here in those early 1900s. — Did you know that Ernie Hayes had Blackball's first car? — A Model 'T' Ford of course. After Charlie Robinson and Lou Stenhouse were married in Grey they travelled to Blackball (to live) in Ernie's car. But they only got as far as Blackball's Hilton Street — because then the front wheel fell off.



BELOW: Perhaps Blackball did have coal to burn, but fancy letting the Railway Station burn. (By courtesy W. Driscoll).



in January 1899 and a 5-head battery was erected. How the battery was ever packed in there will remain a mystery - there is a very steep drop of 1000 feet from the ridge down to the 10 Mile valley below. This is the valley where old-timers, like Joe McIvor, fossicked most of their lives for good gold. And because it is so inaccessible you will find good gold there to this very day. Make the trip next Christmas - horses can be arranged. From 1899 till 1910 there were 1012 ozs of gold won from approximately 2900 tons of quartz from these open-cut workings. Later this battery was buried by a land slide.

These were the only four batteries to operate in this area, but many prospecting claims were taken out in names like Sunrise, Golden Fleece, Triple Alliance, Sunlight, South Pole, Nil Desperandum. Most of these proved negative, though a few, Poneke, Sunlight, Corries Reward, and Homeward Bound have proved to be gold bearing.

Exit the quartz reefs - until the depression days, that is.

All this activity in the gold mines and quartz batteries meant that stores and other businesses had to develop to supply the needs of the worker, the housewife, and the school children. One store that has become a part of the town was established in 1897 by Goodwins. In 1903 it became Armstrong and Haisty. Mr Haisty (Senior) ran this shop with his staff. The branch at Ngahere was run by Dave Armstrong J.P., and the Roa Store by Jim Sartori assisted by Lil Armstrong (later Mrs Ramage of Cobden). The shop sold almost everything under the sun. They bought bread and cake from Mr Dumbleton for reselling. In 1928 the store was lost in a fire and rebuilt in 1929 on its present site. A figure not to be forgotten was Charlie Senior, who would take goods to Roa in the spring cart then load up horses like Dolly, Darkie, and Galway, for the long pack up to middle flat.

Yes, you probably wonder where Roa comes into the picture. Well, it's like this, Henry Neilsen who found the quartz outcrop of Croesus didn't stop with that discovery - he kept right on searching until, sometime after Premier Dick Seddon drove the first pile for the Blackball railway bridge (1902), he came across the coal outcrop at Roa. To launch a new coal company in the district would be a big job - too big for Mr Neilsen - so he paid a visit to Christchurch. For a while things looked doubtful, but finally his solicitor suggested putting on a big dinner. Mr Neilsen did just that - and swung the deal his way. This coal lease of 1000 acres of Greymouth Harbour Board land had a lot of problems with its steep country. Development was a major task involving the construction of 2 miles of standard gauge centre-rail railway from Blackball to Roa (the steepest centre rail ever in N.Z.); 50 chains of endless rope-haulage incline; two tunnels 20 and 53 chains long; a 12 chain viaduct; and bins of 4500 tons capacity (the largest in N.Z.). The first coal from these workings was shipped in the 1910s.

Continued on page 21

THE FIRST PASSENGER TRAIN
IN BLACKBALL AUGUST 1st 1910.



Preparing for the banquet, the ball, and other big centennial events.

ABOVE: Mrs Yvonne Shaw of Dunnollie as the kids watch her get lunch ready. Hubby Bill used to work at Roa.

RIGHT: Jemima Spence (now of Christchurch) wearing a lovely brooch of the stones of Scotland. She was at Blackball from 1912 till the 1930s.

BELOW: Using an old house at Faversham were Linda Pearce; Mrs Alma Pearce; Christine, Mary, and Mrs Margaret Southerwood (her hubby used to be in Roa mine and boarded with Don McFadyen).



ABOVE: Not exactly pin-up girls - not yet anyhow. Mrs M. McDonald of Christchurch, Kay Allen, and Mrs W. Allen, (her husband Bill drove the coaches in the good old days).



ABOVE: The Goodall sisters who recall early days at Blackball School. Mrs B. Roberts of Nelson Creek and Mrs A. Heyward of Blackball.

RIGHT: Pipe band member gets prettied up for the procession - Jocelyn Bailey of Gladstone.

BELOW: It may be centennial time, but you can still have fun to see who does the dishes. Gretchen Tong (Christchurch visitor) and Dorothy McArthur, who went to school in Blackball.

LEFT: Mr and Mrs John Shaw of Faversham have been here since 1924. They have about 17 grandchildren - actually they lost count!



Actually the coal from Roa couldn't be used before 1909 in any case. You see, it had taken from 1902 till November 1909 to get the railway branch line constructed from Ngahere to Roa. Bridging the Grey River proved to be one of the biggest problems. Harry Bignel was the contractor. Then there was a terrific amount of excavating to do at the site of the Blackball station and bins - this was when Mr G. Perrotti's sawmill had to be shifted to make way for the railway station.

Past the Blackball mine there were upwards of 130 men working on putting in the railway for the Paparoa Coal Co and also on tunnel, viaduct, and Roa bins construction. Both the Roa and Blackball coal bins (4500 and 3000 tons respectively) were finished in 1909 to coincide with the completion of the railway. Power for the bins at Roa came from Pelton Wheels using power from water races in Ford's and Tunnel Creeks.

Now that two coal mines were operating at Blackball a lot of other things were affected. The railway wagons could shift far more Blackball coal than the old aerial ever could - so production began to rise; more men worked; the township grew; more railways staff and wagons were needed; and the coal unloading facilities at the Grey Harbour were improving.

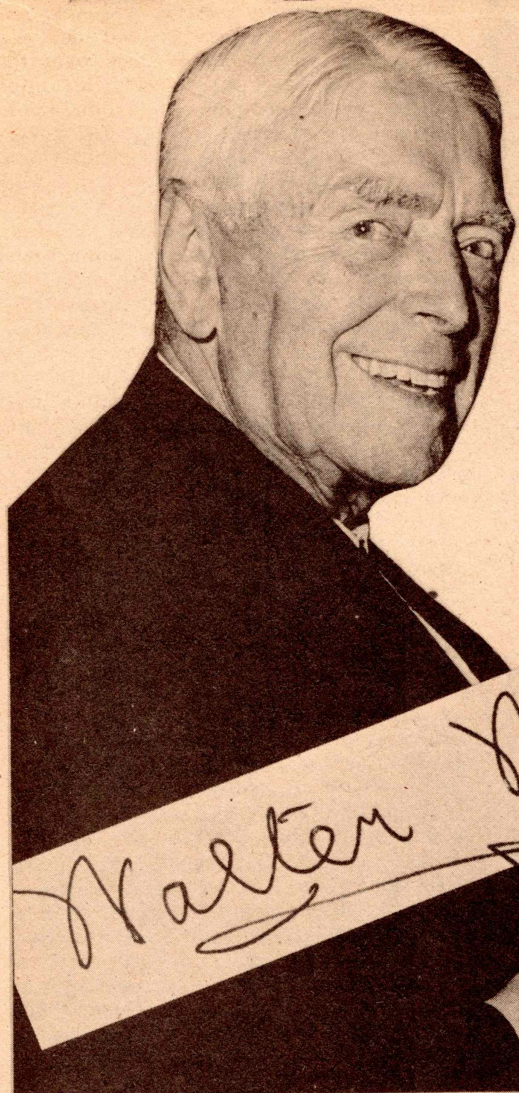
But as the manpower at Blackball increased so did the miners become more organised to claim their just rights. Way back in 1904 'Auzzie' Bob Semple was responsible for the first State Mines Union at Runanga, and of course Blackball soon followed. Then in 1908 came something 'new' at Blackball - an organised strike for better conditions. This success helped the organisation until in 1910 the New Zealand Labour Party was formed, mainly to help the working man. Things were looking up when in 1911 a Royal commission gave the red light for providing miners change and bath houses. Mind you there was still a lot of improvement needed in underground hours etc, so it wasn't surprising that three months' work was lost in 1913 with Blackball's 'Tucker-Time' strike. Oh, yes, the case went to court - and after some hours the judge ordered a halt in proceedings while a tea break was taken. Well, ask yourself, this was what the miners were fighting for down in their mine - Yes, they won the case, of course. Both the Miners Union and the Labour Party continued to grow. They had their ups and downs though. On the one hand there were all the strikes - little ones in 1919 at Roa, but almost the whole of 1920 was a strike at Roa over taking mine-tub weights. Again in 1923 both mines had hold-ups due to labour trouble. But the climax to the strikes came in 1931 - after a dispute work ceased on 23rd January, and on 31st March all plant was removed from the main section and the Blackball mine flooded. As a direct result of this strike a new company, 'The Blackball Creek Co Ltd', was formed, which worked pillars etc in the old mine steadily until 1959. Initially this 10 man party used a two mile water flume to carry coal to their 600 ton bins, but in 1943 this system was not used - instead access was through a main tunnel.

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ABOVE: Mrs D. McArthur is one who helps the coal industry in a positive way. Born in Blackball 51 years ago she still uses the Shacklock Orion.

LEFT: 'Spot' is Mrs McArthur's 11 year old foxie.

THE BANQUET...



RIGHT: Mrs Edie and Tessie Smith made this beautiful centennial cake for secretaries Don McFadyen and Mrs Mason to cut. At the back can be seen ex - Blackball boy Stan Whitehead, now M.P. for Nelson. Stan was replacing Paddy Blanchfield whose visit to hospital kept him away.

Paddy, you have the prayers and hearts of the West Coasters on your side.



TOP LEFT: Guest speaker Walter Nash.

LEFT: Mrs Ada Moore (nee Nuttall) nattering about old times.

BOTTOM LEFT: One of the few occasions when ex-Roa manager 'Phonse O'Donnell and wife have attended a public function in Blackball. Yes - those were hard days.

RIGHT: A warm handshake from Mrs Anderson as another face is recognized.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Well, fancy meeting you here - Mrs Daly, Mrs J. Williams, and Mrs James (of Auckland).



RIGHT: Typical of the crowd that packed the Miner's Hall are these few of a total of 700-odd.



LEFT: Mrs Bailey recalls an incident with George Symons (of Timaru).



LEFT: Can-can girl Noeline East, surprises an onlooker.
RIGHT: Somebody has to do it - Andrew Neilson, Mrs I. Carpenter, and Sandra Roberts.



And so to 1935. The Treasury benches for the first time saw a Labour Government and Paddy Webb it was who became Minister of Mines. In 1940 a decision was made and the State took over the Blackball mine. For 54 years this mine had only known two names - from 1886 to 1926 it was the Blackball Coal Co, Wellington; and from 1927 the Blackball Coal Mines Pty, Christchurch. For many years the directors must have been worried - as early as 1930 there were problems with the mineralized water. Underground water, spontaneous combustion, soft roof, and ground rolls all gave problems to the directors until in 1940 the mine was about to be abandoned. So the State saved the day - for 24 years anyhow - until the final closing on September 24th, 1964.

But the Roa mine still operates with a recent road to replace the old incline. Only since 1947 has the State owned this mine. In its early years Roa was several times liquidated and re-formed as working capital got less and less. Though not as big an employer as Blackball it has provided steady work to as many as 100.

When the coal trade got slack there was always the gold. Way back in 1888 some lucky digger found a 70 oz nugget - next thing there was a rush of 200 men to Ford's Creek. A lot of these men were Chinese who worked also in Soldiers Creek and on Lingren's Terrace.

In 1896-1897 Mr G. Perotti (Italian Consul in Greymouth) floated a company in the head of Blackball Creek to sluice a good area of ground - he proposed erecting hydraulic cranes to shift huge boulders and setting up electric lights so work could be done 24 hours a day. The gear was all bought, but unfortunately never got onto the site. Yes, this claim is still there today. About this same time there was an unexpected gold rush to the mouth of the Blackball mine. Gold was found in the clayey sub-soil on the opposite side of the creek. What fun for those inexperienced coal miners, boys, and even women as they won over 100 ozs of gold quite close to the surface in 2 or 3 weeks. In 1900 there were six parties ground sluicing in the Upper Blackball and alluvial gold claims in the area were held by men like:- J. T. Kinsella, J. Shrives, and J. Stenhouse. J. Pettitt, J. Hay, G. Phfahlert, H. Marsden and G. Anderson. Anton Anderson. J. Cox, H. Dimond, W. Sherman, E. P. Fowler, William Hunter, F. Bovstridge and H. Egden. Henry Bignell, Joshua McIntyre. Hugh Allison. Jacob Weber. Andrew Jamieson. Joseph Butler, while a lot of prospecting was being done by a Mr H. A. Wick.

1900 to 1903 saw a dredging boom on the Coast (though many were not a success), and Blackball also had its dredge. Located at the junction of Ford's and Blackball Creeks sat the 'Ford's Creek Dredge'. The dredge was completed in December 1900 but only ran for a year and later went into liquidation - lack of power and its inability to reach the bottom were its troubles. Details of this dredge are: - designed by Cutten Bros; pontoon size 85' x 29' x 7' deep; dredging depth 30'; power from 20 h.p. boiler; cost approx. £5600.

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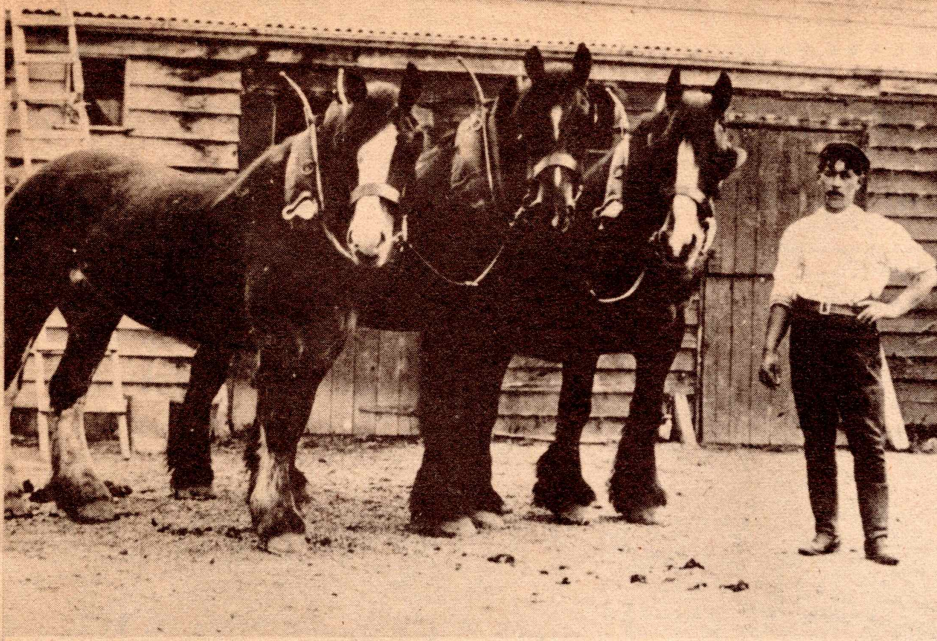


ABOVE: Any faces here you can recall? This photo from Jack Muir, taken over 50 years ago, shows a group of miners going on duty. At left is Joe Thompson, and man with small pick in front is Jack Muir. Dick Lowe second from right.

LEFT: A group working on the building of the Blackball bins. Third from right is Mr. Ted Williams. (By courtesy Mrs E. Williams, St Kilda, Brunner).



Old Blackball Mine



ABOVE: About 1912. Mrs J. Rathbun has supplied this interesting photo taken by the German firm of Haller and Sciutti. These pit horses did a grand job down below in the old Blackball mine.

BELOW: The original Blackball bins about 1910. Note the covered way to the old mine towards the right; new office at right; back shunt line at bottom right; railway yards at left. Bush covered spur behind mine has long since slipped into the gully. When the State Mines took over development was on the other side of the valley to the left of the photo. (By courtesy Mr Climo).



There is a lot more to the history of Blackball - like the sawmills. Mr G. Perrotti had one sawmill at the site of the Blackball railway station run by Mr Daly. This was shifted to the Brunner track when the railway was put in. He also had a second mill at the head of Blackball Creek beside the Croesus quartz battery in 1898. The State mill operating at Roa today is of recent vintage.

Other events have shaped the history of Blackball, and of the West Coast in some instances.

1914 - Local boy D. Frickleton gained a V.C. in World War I.

1915 - Birth of Rugby League on the Coast.

1918 - The big 'flu epidemic and the fine work by Dr Telford.

1927 - Mrs Parsonage, wife of the mine manager turned on the electric power to the township on 29th March. The Grey Electric Power Board under engineer Mr Lithgow did the connecting to the houses. The initial power supply was from the coal company's steam generator, but was soon changed to the G.E.P.B. power supply across the Grey River. Old hands with the Power Board like Mr Langbein and Jim Grant would recall those days.

1938 - Driving of the Blackball mine on the south-west side of Ford's Creek started - and just as a sign of bad luck this was started on 1st April!

1939 - An extract from Rab Clark's diary of 2nd September tells us a story. 'Trades Council meeting in town. Very good day. Had a bath and listened in to War News' - but for one David Kirk it brought a proud moment. For his work in helping Sergeant Upham to gain a V.C. David received the D.C.M.

But, for a strong Labour supporting town like Blackball, there were sad notes - like the loss of Michael Joseph Savage, that great leader, and again in 1950 came a blow with the death of Peter Fraser.

The loss of these men was a blow to the party and to Blackball. But still another blow fell in 1964 when the mine closed. Does it all sound depressing? Well perhaps it is, but it's all finished with now.

Can new industry be set up in the town? Can the town be made prettier, or more attractive? Can Blackball be publicised as something other than a coal mining town?

The potential is there. The mountains; the gold; the forests; the creeks; the wild game; the protected bird life - but who and how will it be organised. Yes, Blackball, only 20 miles from Greymouth, is a tourist resort going begging.

What do you think?

References made use of:-

(1) Mines Department Annual Reports 1888-1964.

(2) Nelson Provincial Government and Wardens Reports 1864-72.

(3) 'Geology of the Greymouth Sub-division' by P. G. Morgan.

(4) 'The Greymouth Coalfield' bulletin by M. Gage.

(5) Various interviews with old identities etc.

(6) Annual reports of Croesus Mines Ltd.

(7) Grey Wardens Court Records.

THIS IS

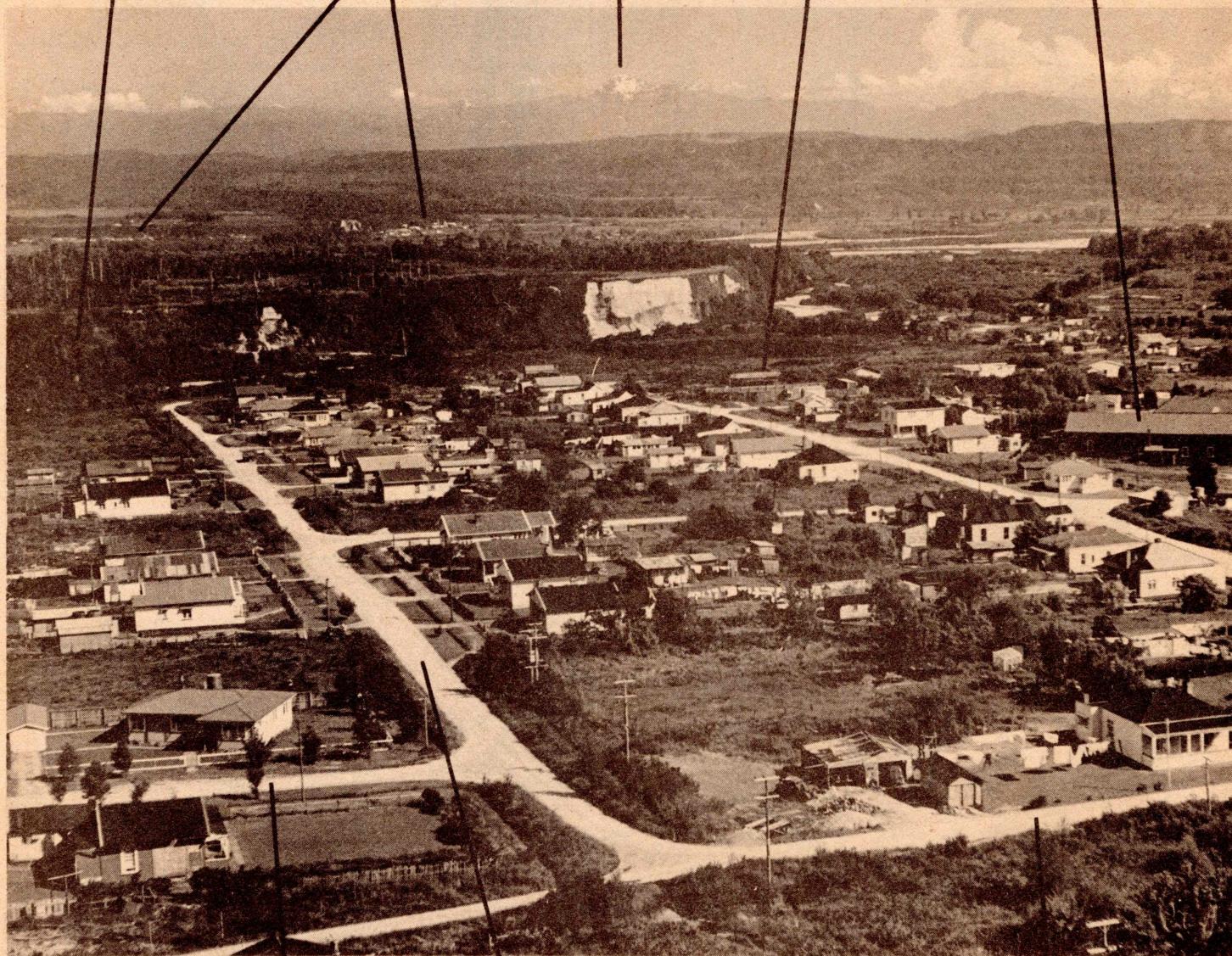
BLACKBALL CREEK
WHERE 'ARGO'
DREDGED.

MT. ALEXANDER.
THE BLACKBALL HILLS
OFFER GOOD VIEWS.

MINER'S
HALL.

NGAHERE TOWN.
TERMINUS OF AERIAL IN
EARLY COAL DAYS

SWIMMING
BATHS.



ROAD TO THE
BLACKBALL SCHOOL

BRODIE STREET.

KILGOUR STREET.

WHY NOT make your next holiday a visit to Blackball. The town offers ALL facilities — hotels, shops, T.A.B., churches, swimming baths, halls. For your leisure hours there is — the domain, swimming holes in nearby creeks, fishing in Grey River, bush walks, visit to coal mine, old track to Mt Croesus, gold panning in old workings, prospecting for new minerals, enjoyable social evenings.

BLACKBALL-1966

EARLY SCHOOL
BUILDING.
(NOW MASONIC HALL).

DOMAIN .

SLOPES TO
KINSELLA PEAK .

MAIN ROAD
FROM NGAHERE

OLD AERIAL TO
NGAHERE BINS RAN
DOWN THIS STREET.

FORD CREEK .

CLIFFORD STREET .

SITE OF JOLLIFES
FIRST HOTEL IN
BLACKBALL TOWN.

ROAD TO ROA
AND CRESCUS .

FIRE STATION .

SITE OF FIRST
GARAGE .

DID YOU KNOW that Blackball has a hostel with facilities to sleep scores of holidaymakers — points for caravans, hot and cold water, large lounge, hall suitable for indoor bowls, fine views of Paparoa Mountains.

Here is a part of Blackball that will never die. The coal, the gold, the millable timber, can all be consumed — but the beauty of the protection forests in the many branches of Blackball Creek is there forever.

This picture could well depict the story of Blackball. Here you see a giant Silver Beech that has died and fallen. Then the pretty mosses and ferns cover the dead giant. And last comes new life as young Beech trees spring up to hide the decayed monster.

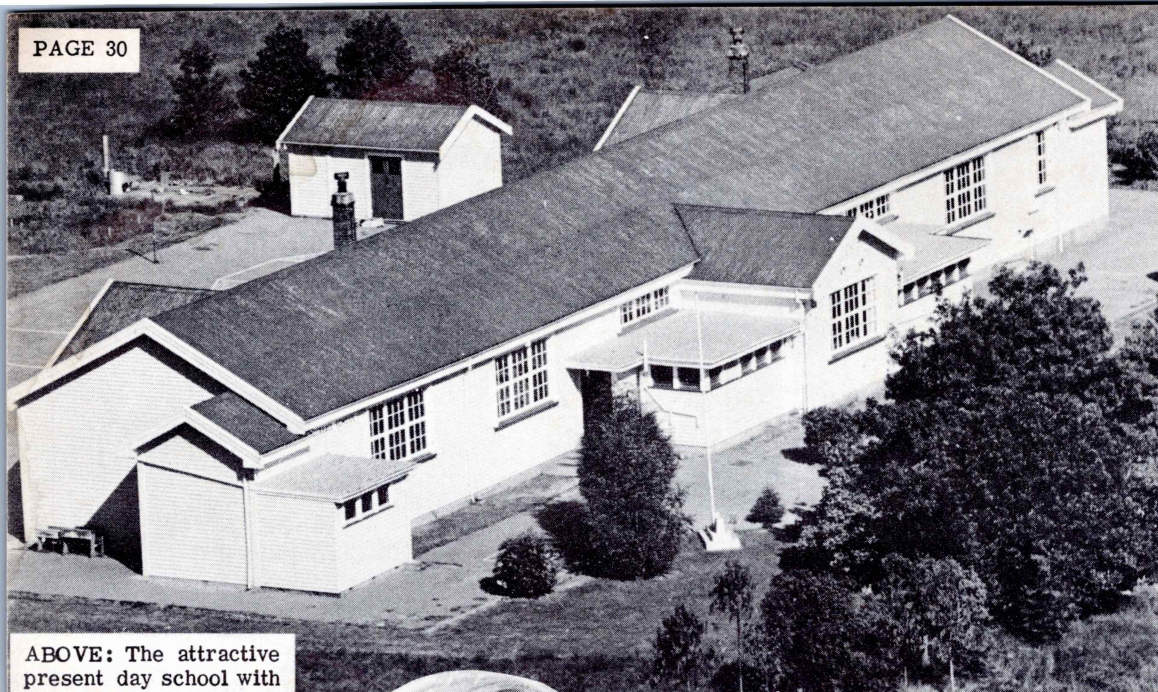
Likewise is Blackball; a giant has fallen; the houses and streets are invaded by grass, weeds, and bush. But the last stage has yet to come. How can new life be put into Blackball? Will it be working for minerals like copper and gold? Will it be developing tourist trips along a fantastic valley to re-work old gold areas? Or will it be something else? What do you think?

1866-1966

Centennial Of Blackball







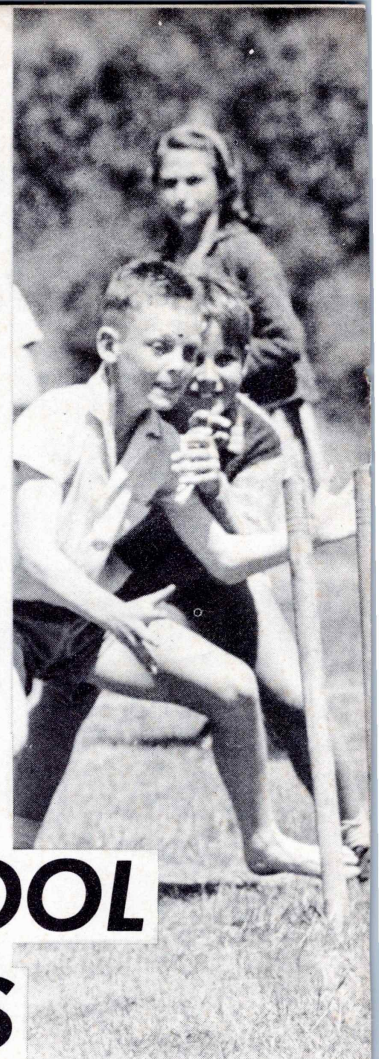
ABOVE: The attractive present day school with its well laid out grounds.

BELOW: Graham Lingard and Gary McLennan at the taps for drinking. Bet you had some fun in your school days — squirting water at the girl friend, or pushing somebody's face in the water. Didn't you enjoy it though.



BLACKBALL SCHOOL DAYS

RIGHT: From Mr J. Neilson comes this fine photo of Blackball School in 1914 or '15. Let's see now — that would make a lot of you pupils about 60 years of age now. Suppose you are all thinking of retiring and living in Blackball again.





ABOVE: Present day pupils can belt that piece of leather around every bit as good as you old-timers. So you don't agree — then what about a challenge game? Wayne O'Donnell, Bryce Bisset, Lynne Buchanan (at back), Michael Webb, Michael O'Donnell (batting), Scott Williams, Thomas Magee, Leslie Mountford.



Blackball Coal Company Ltd. of N.Z.

PAGE 32

LONDON OFFICE.

7 & 8, POULTRY, E.C.

77 HEREFORD ST., CHRISTCHURCH.

MINES: BLACKBALL, NEW ZEALAND.

SHIPPING PORT: GREYMOUTH.

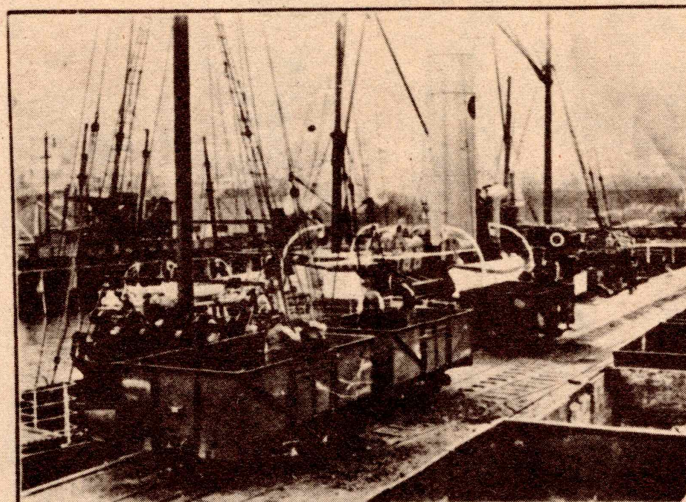
HULKS AT WELLINGTON AND LYTTELTON.

Blackball Coal Company

ARE NOW OFFERING
A VERY HIGH-CLASS

Bituminous Steam
and Household Coal

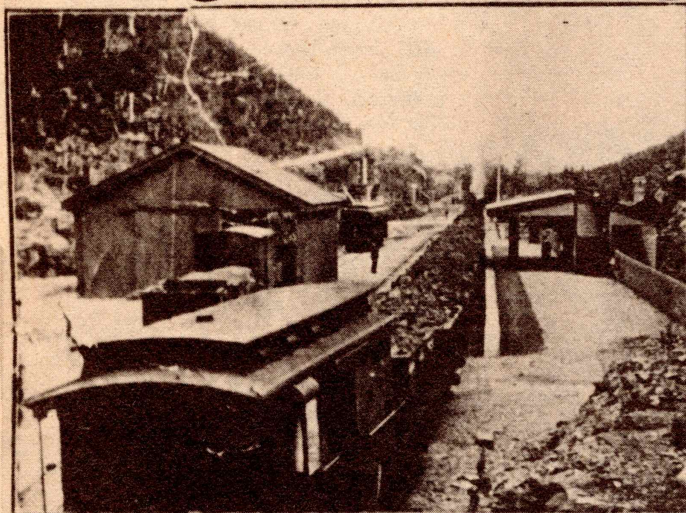
Unsurpassed by any Coal
in the Dominion



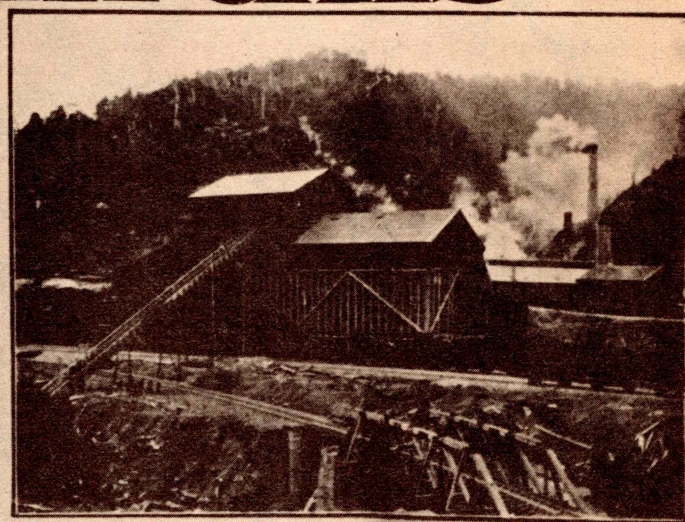
The output from the Mines is increasing so rapidly that the Company has just had built to their order another large up-to-date Steam Collier, the "Ngakuta," to carry 2,500 tons, which will run in conjunction with their present, very fine Colliers, the "Ngatoro" and "Ngahere," each of 1,500 tons capacity. The output from the Mines now amounts to about 250,000 tons yearly, having increased from 86,000 tons during the last six years.

1914

From this...



A LARGE RAKE OF TRUCKS LEAVING BLACKBALL MINE FOR GREYMOUTH.



THE MAIN ENTRANCE TO BLACKBALL, SHOWING BINS.

BLACKBALL COAL.

It is hoped that the following instructions by an Engineer with long experience of Blackball Coal will be of service to steam users:—

Blackball is a bituminous coal of a high calorific value, containing a large quantity of hydrocarbons. It burns well, giving a long white flame and a hot fire, with very little clinker or ash.

The coal burning well does not require more than an ordinary draught, and care should be taken that the damper is adjusted so as to give a sufficient though not excessive draught. To secure complete combustion and a good fire, the bars should be cooled to a thickness of 12 to 14 inches at the front, and sloping away to 8 or 6 inches at the back end. The fire should be fired at short intervals of from 10 to 15 minutes, a thin even layer of coal being distributed over the front of the fire and let stand until thoroughly ignited, and it should then be well sliced and the rake used to push it to the back end, care being taken to see that the green coal does not get worked down on to the bars.

The air ways through the fire bars should be kept well open with the pricker.

From an advert. in an old 'Canterbury Times' magazine.

As coal fires can be cleaned

with little or no loss of steam. The fire to be cleaned should be well burnt down and the bars bared for about half the width of the furnace, and the clinker allowed to cool slightly, when it can be lifted easily with the slice, as it then comes freely away from the bars. The other side of the fire should then be similarly treated. Fires will only require cleaning about once in 24 hours with this coal.

These conditions apply both to steam and small coal, the only difference being the small coal will require a little more frequent use of the slice and rake.

NOTE.—About 24 lbs. of air are required in actual practice to burn 1 lb. of coal, and with proper combustion the gases will be carried off at from 6 to 9 ft. per second, and the fireman can easily tell if his fire is getting sufficient air to obtain good results by an examination of the fires and the smoke issuing from the stack. If only a small quantity of smoke is issuing, and the fire is clear and bright, then the air is right. If, however, the smoke is black and heavy, and the fire dull looking, then there is not sufficient air, and the fire will have to be cleaned and the pricker must be used to open the air ways between the bars.

With the Compliments of

The Blackball Coal Company Ltd.

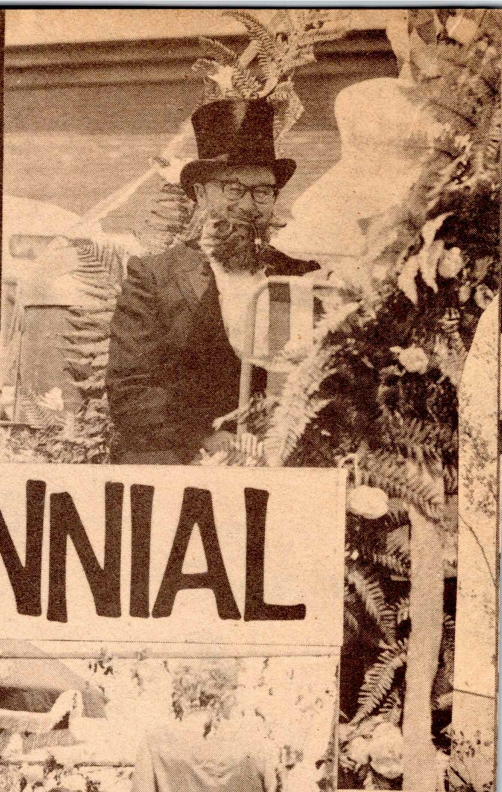
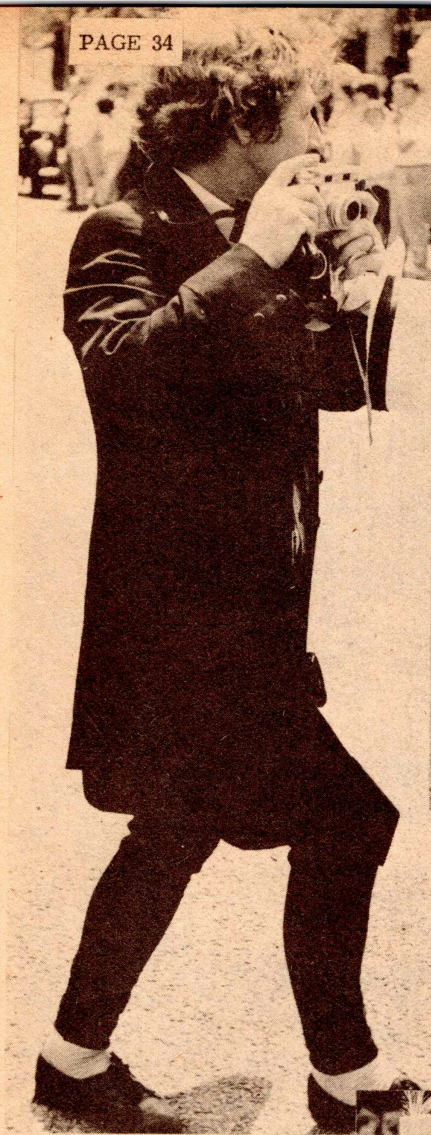
LEFT: Rory Moore with a last day 'souvenir'.
RIGHT: For men like winchman Norman Thompson September 24th 1964 was a sad day.

Guided by Alex Howden the coal drill bites into Blackball coal for the last time.

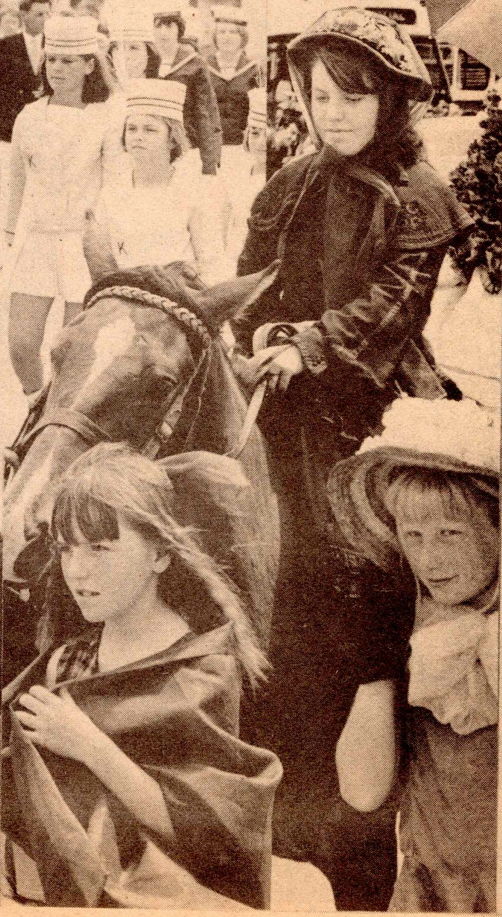
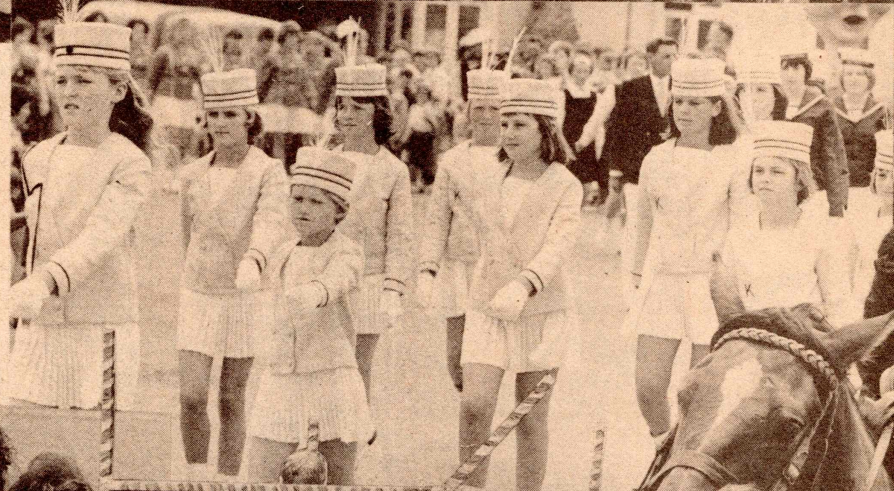
To this 1964

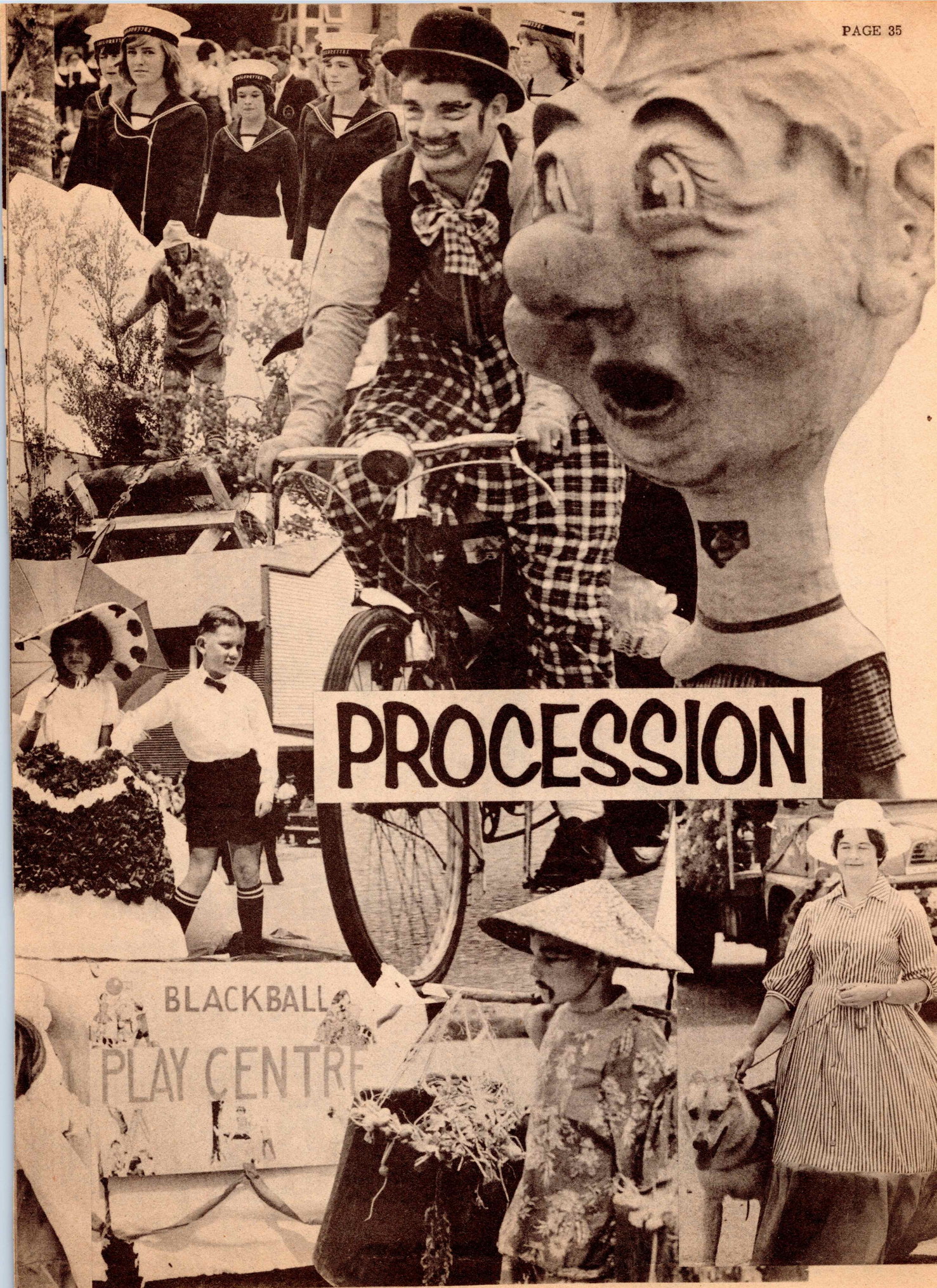
The final load of miners on production work reach the surface.

LEFT: 10 years of successful dog watch by Alex Bray and 'Jack'.
ABOVE: Over goes the last box of coal with George Nuttall doing the honours.
RIGHT: The oldest miner at Blackball was Bob Dunn.



CENTENNIAL





PROCESSION

BLACKBALL
PLAY CENTRE



RIGHT: Rose, Violet, and Olive Riddiford with their parents in early Blackball.

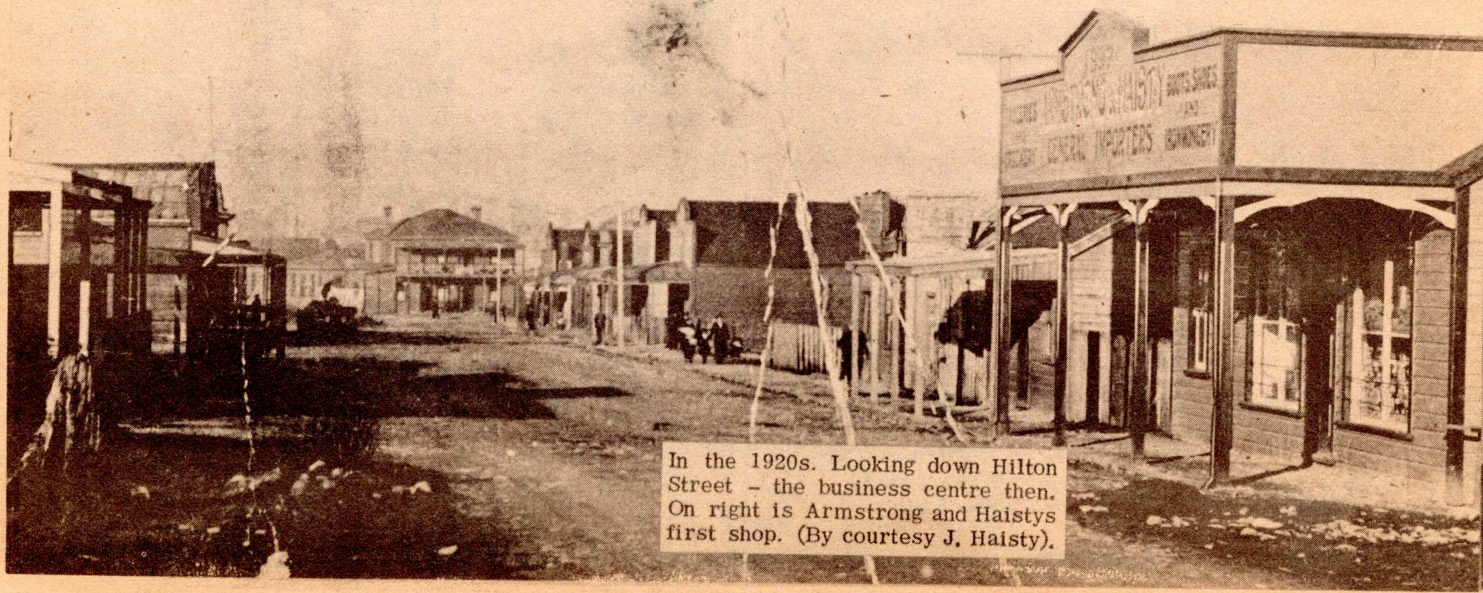
BELOW: The same three sisters during the centennial. Mrs Olive Tiplady, Mrs Rose Gibson (aged 75), and Mrs Violet Whiting.



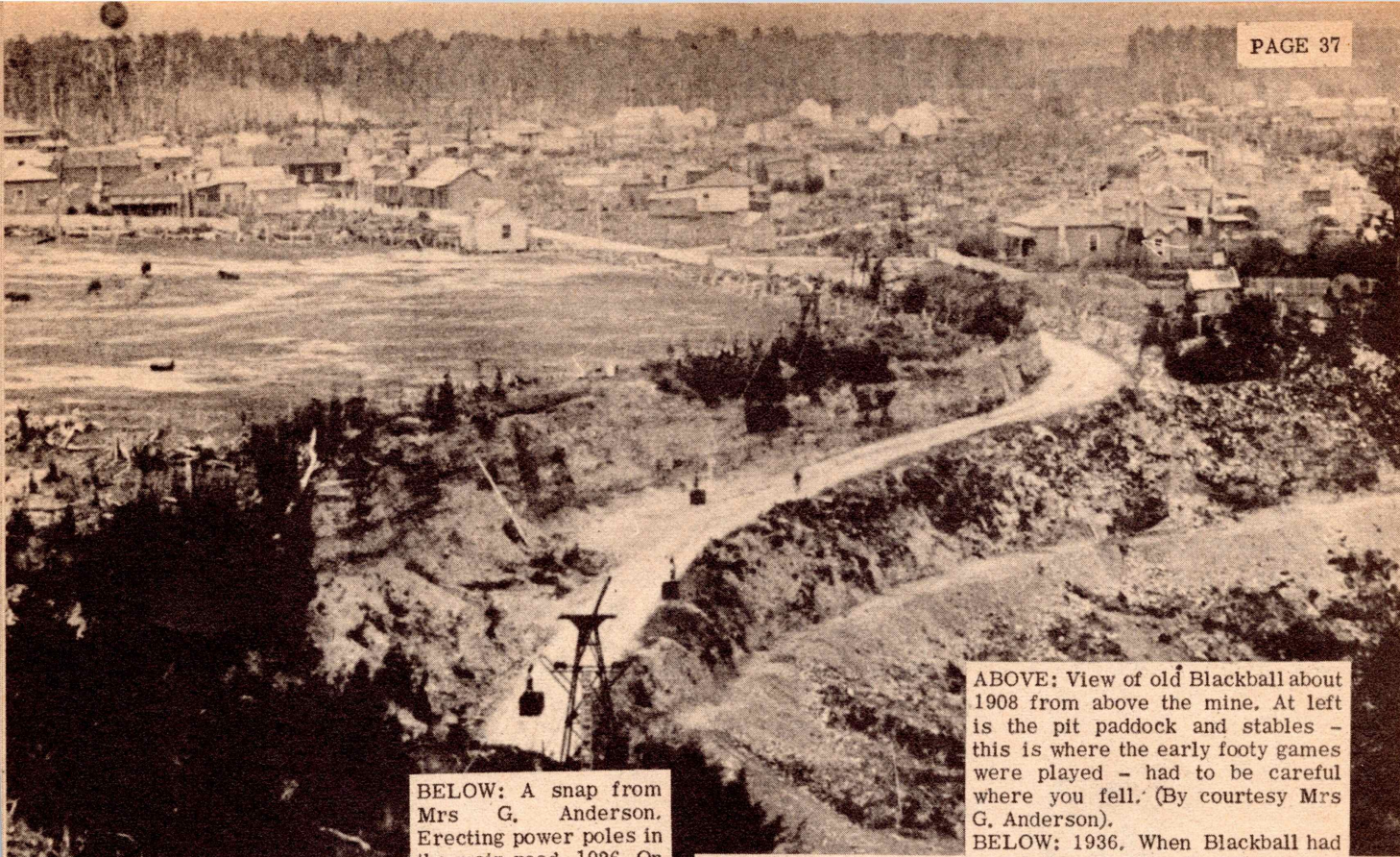
BELOW: Grand-dad Riddiford's shop in Blackball during the 1890s. Mr Riddiford was the first milkman in the town - used to carry the cans Chinese fashion on a yoke, one each side. Later milkmen were Joe Stenhouse, then Billy Neilson (who sold his farm to the Argo Dredge). Next was Mr Mulcare of Ngahere then the Burt brothers of Brunner Track. (By courtesy Mrs Gibson).



BELOW: The old miner's hostel - now a community centre. This building has all facilities including electric plugs for caravans. What wonderful potential as a tourist centre.



In the 1920s. Looking down Hilton Street - the business centre then. On right is Armstrong and Haistys first shop. (By courtesy J. Haisty).

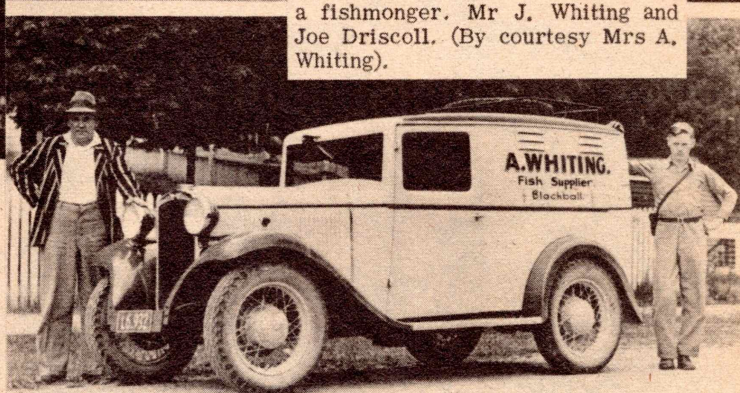


ABOVE: View of old Blackball about 1908 from above the mine. At left is the pit paddock and stables - this is where the early footy games were played - had to be careful where you fell. (By courtesy Mrs G. Anderson).

BELOW: A snap from Mrs G. Anderson. Erecting power poles in the main road, 1926. On 29th March 1927, Mrs Parsonage pulled the switch to turn the power on.

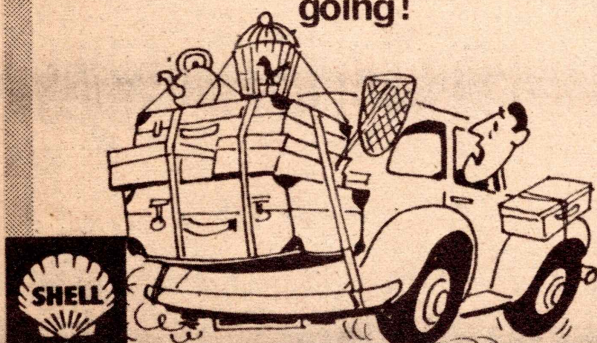


BELOW: 1936, When Blackball had a fishmonger. Mr J. Whiting and Joe Driscoll. (By courtesy Mrs A. Whiting).



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Kennedy Bros.
Greymouth

A GREAT MAN-RAB CLARK

DECEMBER, 1934

Monday, 24

morning + self ^{at 5:30} ~~at 5:30~~ for Int Ryall.
Saw all Track men except "Snowy". Had
cup Tea with Mrs. Butterworth. Passed joke
about Hiking being a scotsmans Holiday. Called
in Garden Gully, Mr. Hilley up for Holidays. Stayed
Mr. Gilleys Camp. Had good look over Hills. very
warm. lost lot of sweat.

Tuesday, 25

up early, had breakfast then set out for
Berrytown. Not had going down ridge. come to
place marked "Track on level" scrambled down old
creek bed. very rough. lost heel of boot. Got down
still losing sweat. Called at sky's hut. said. Had
not been to Mass. Walked down road. picked up
by Priest. In time for Xmas dinner at Jeans.
Slept Bob's Hut. Fleas everywhere.
met Mr. + Mrs. Shannon.

Wednesday, 26



Thursday, 27

Still at 9 mile. after breakfast. car +
I walked into Runanga. visited Greening's
Mrs. Mottok + the Hills. Took some
goods back with us. Farguler drove
us out. Slept again at Bilt.

Friday, 28

Still at 9 mile. weather still good.
Come into Grey in evening. Spent
time ~~unpacking~~ about the streets
Got home by train. Bus took luggage
to Mountfords place. Put out some
chips. to finish year.

Saturday 29

APRIL, 1934

Monday, 23

113-252

Very wet day.
Called at Colliery Office. Got 10/-
change for sheet iron. Picked up 1/3 from gross.
Must have lain there since pay day. Went up
Roa. Saw Hodges claim, also Carson + Latimer.
Mauden + Hutchinson.

Went to Wallend last Bus. stayed
at Kagan. talked about "Rules". Ship cleaned in
Got away 1/2 15/ half Race.

Tuesday, 24

114-251

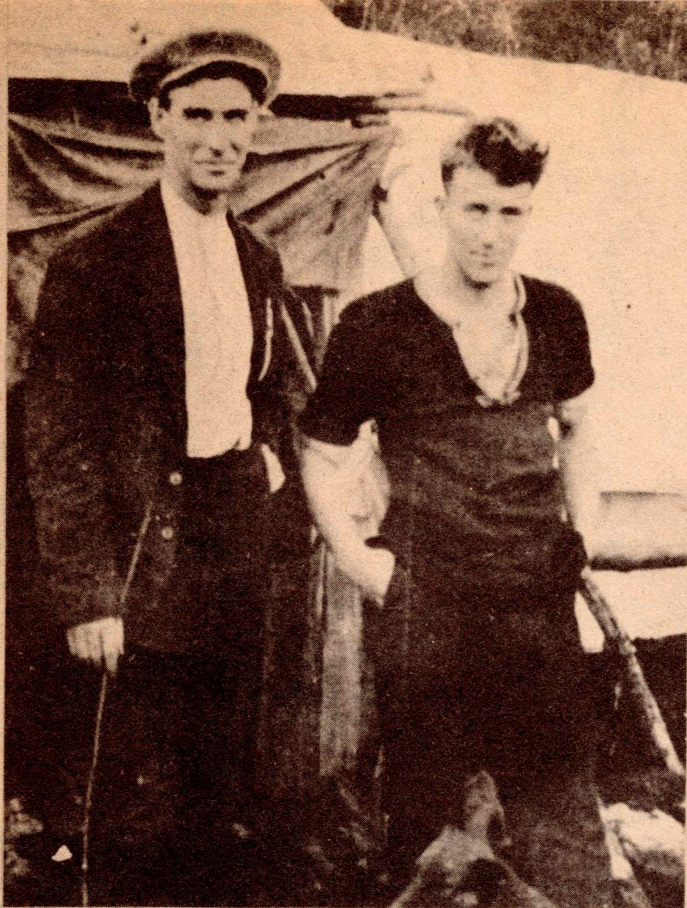
Still wet.
Morning Bus went past + forgot me. I
walked up the road. continued to beyond
Karmaka when a car picked me up. Six others
passed me. "A great hearted people". Went up.
I saw the Gibsons. Advised them to see Quinn.
Saw Jones + Hood + Carter. Insurance 10/-
Ship in Race.

Wednesday, 25

"Amazac day." Had ^{12:50} on sled. Also made
a bins in wash house + emptied wet chaff
into it.

"Take Race 5 15 slipping thru
excessive rains Better boxed in.

Do you recall - Blackball's last hairdresser was "Basin
Bert" Wilson?



APRIL, 1934

Thursday, 26

Had tea with 13 family
 Rode out to "Mines" ²⁵ upper Blackball
 Did not find Mthoor. Had been over to
 ten Mile. Looked all over for Butterworth
 + Beer. Saw their books but not them.
 Dillon + Pky at Tent construction. Clack
 met McGough + it Ritchie + Anderson came down
 Flume. Tommy rode Horse. Young Dick also with us.
 saw slip on water Race.

w. Blackie spoke of "beds"

Friday, 27

- 117 - 248

*went down see V. Weir about cleaning out
 Race. Him + I walked all along Race. Then
 I had interview with Quinn. Matter will have
 to be fixed up between parties.*

Got set shoes. Bess.

Roger hurt.

Removed Bess's shoes Saturday, 28 *called on Roger. He
 wants Doug. in his place.*

*Took pipe out of Biffow's. Tried sending
 inch pipe. Not very successful. Chisholm + Miss McConville
 called. Got two horses. Went down Blackwater. Saw claim
 visited Bill Weir + Roger. He has had ankle. Dickie Perry called*

Sunday, 29

A.

*called Roger's night. Off to bed. had forge
 going. Took shoes off Bess. Ted trying steel pipe.
 Got fi from W. McArthur. price Horse*

Rab Clark. Now there is a name to be remembered in the history of Blackball. Oh yes, there were other names like Paddy Webb and Bob Semple - but somehow they were different.

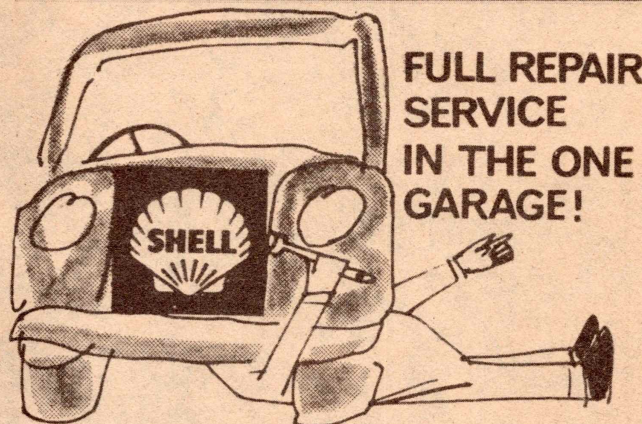
A Scotsman he was, who lived to see 78 years - a lot of them hard ones. In 1910 Rab came to N.Z. for a year or so then in 1912 came back to Blackball permanently as a miner. He was very clever at debating although he was not one to force himself on people. Nature he loved, so it is little wonder that his ashes were finally scattered on the lonely Mt. Croesus. From this peak you can see so much of the country he worked in and lived in. Rab had a way with people whether they were the workers, the bosses, or Members of Parliament.

Many will remember his generosity - perhaps he gave yourself or your folks a much needed pair of shoes in those tough depression days. But then you would recall those days yourself.

In later years (1941-56) Rab gave valuable service as a county councillor. Coronation Year, 1953, saw the Queen award a decoration to Rab, but being the man that he was this was quickly given away and forgotten.

The photo at LEFT shows Rab Clark and Dick Clark on one of the many trips to Upper Moonlight.

The DIARY extracts are from Rab's diaries which cover the years from 1920 to the 1950s. (By courtesy Slim Buchanan).



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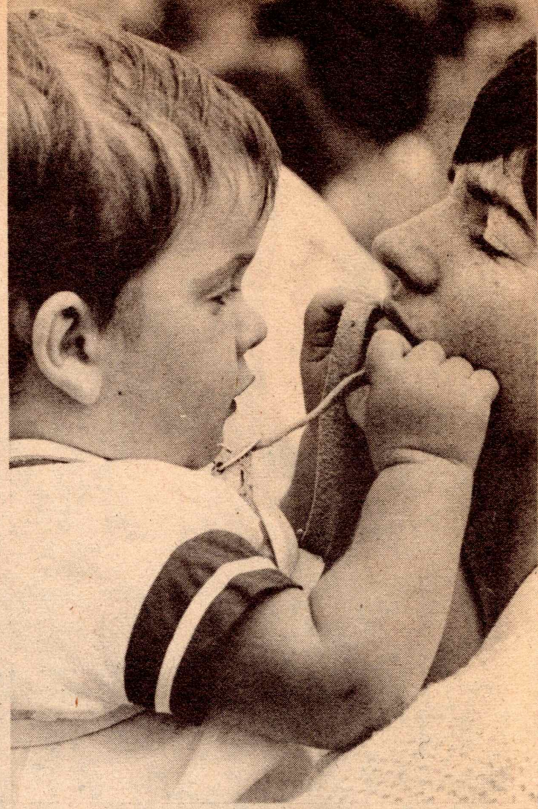
SHOP I.G.A.

PHONE 5520 GREYMOUTH

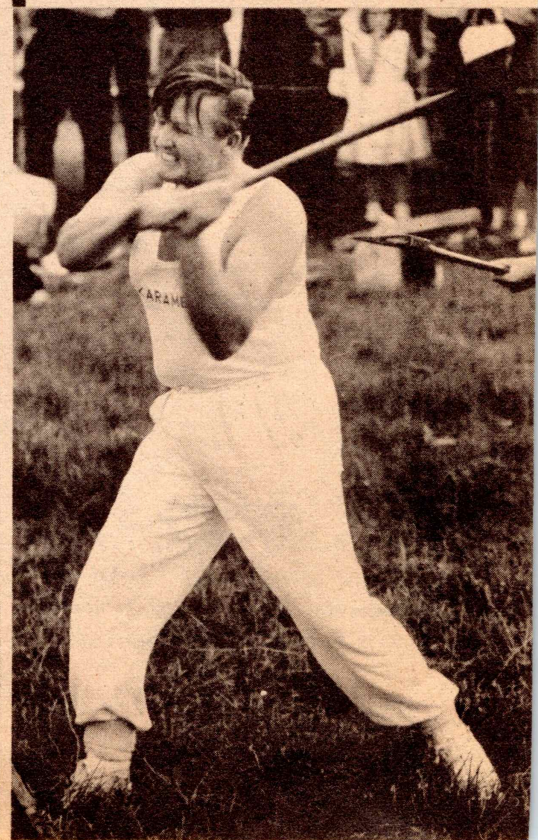
1500 CENTENNIAL SPORTS...



LEFT: While a modern sports meeting progressed, two reminders of old days stood out behind the crowd - the chimney stack of the old Blackball mine, and the 2-storey miners' hostel of bygone days. RIGHT: John Christiansen of Karamea raced well to finish second in this chopping heat.



Do **YOU** know



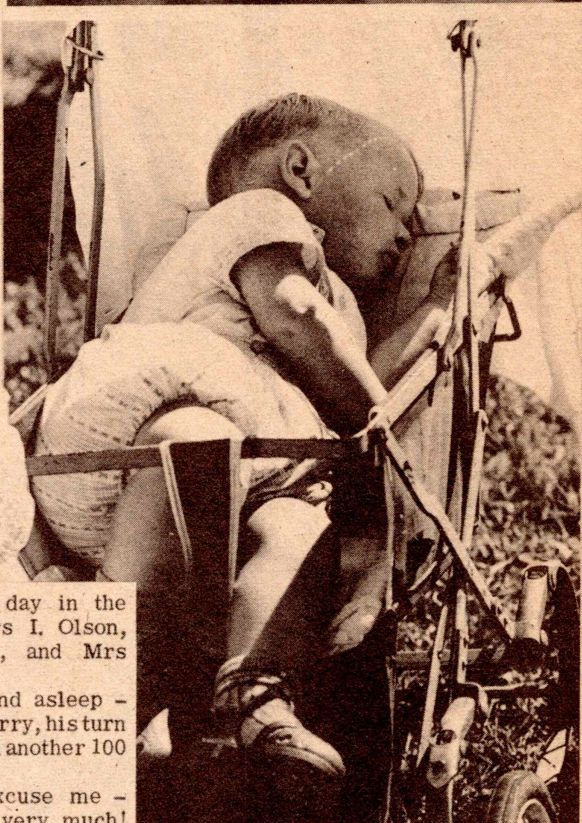


ABOVE LEFT: Enjoying the sunshine on the domain were Mrs Ngaire Hahn with 17 month old Matthew.

ABOVE: Fresh from the recent Tasmanian trip was the Kokatahi Band. Here is Percy Crough playing a sort-of-violin.

ABOVE RIGHT: Popular with the kiddies was the merry-go-round.

LEFT: Hiding behind an advert for the Grey Valley Ambulance Association are seen Joyce Smith and Gwen Richards.



ABOVE: A day in the sun for Mrs I. Olson, of Hokitika, and Mrs Sidey Hill.

RIGHT: Sound asleep - but don't worry, his turn will come in another 100 years.

BELOW: Excuse me - I can't see very much!

what to do

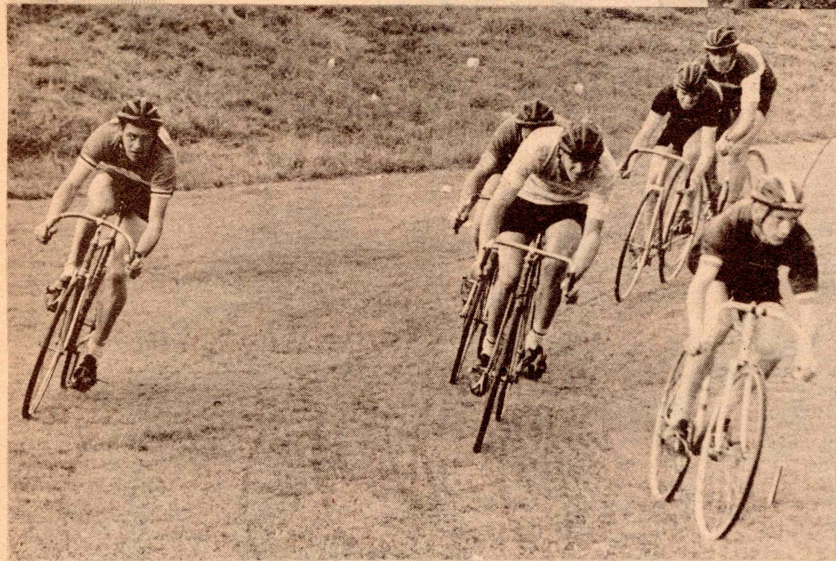


ABOVE: Final of the underhand chop.

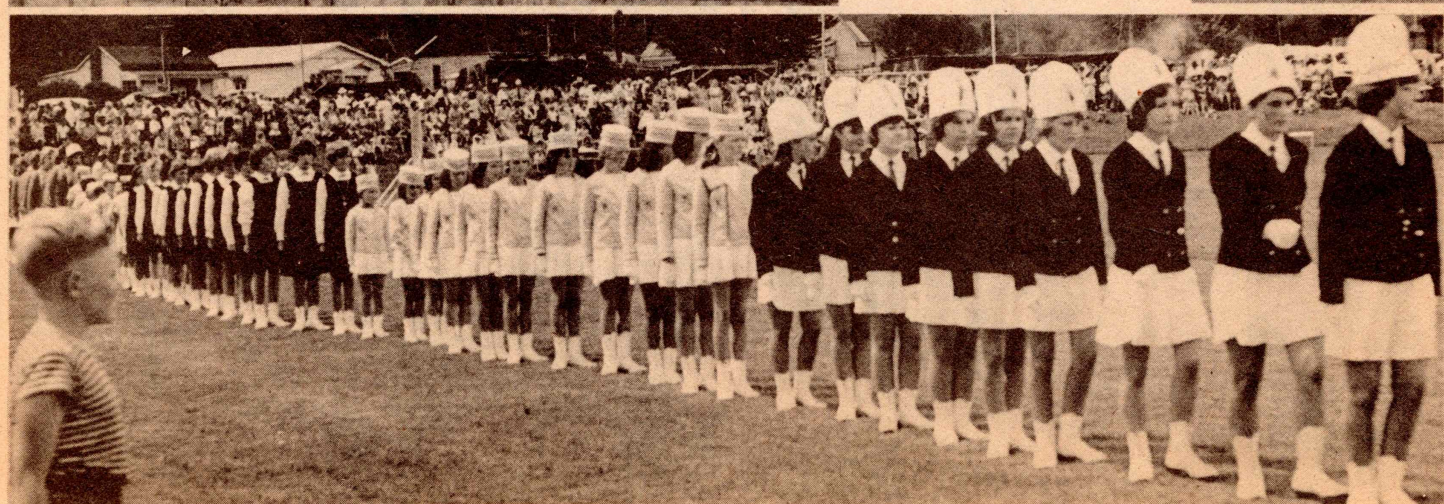




Anne MacDonald and Jimmy Rankin of Blackball, seen on the domain.



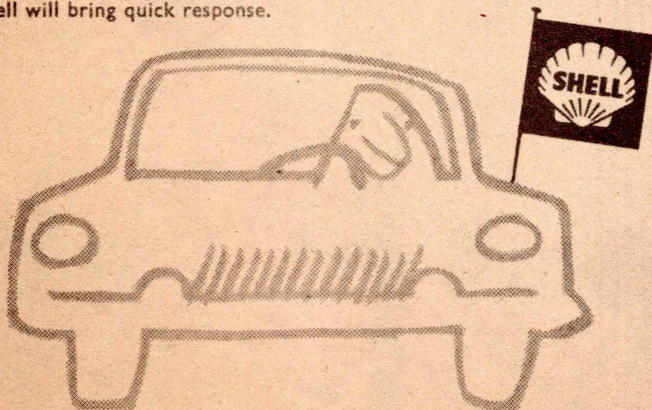
There was a sport for everyone at the centennial sports meeting on the domain. Cycling; Scottish dancing; marching; chopping, kiddies' races; police dogs demonstrating; side shows; procession floats to view; and of course there was 'Snowflake' ice cream. RIGHT: Don Sorenson, of Timaru, being held by Alf Bennett of Ngahere.





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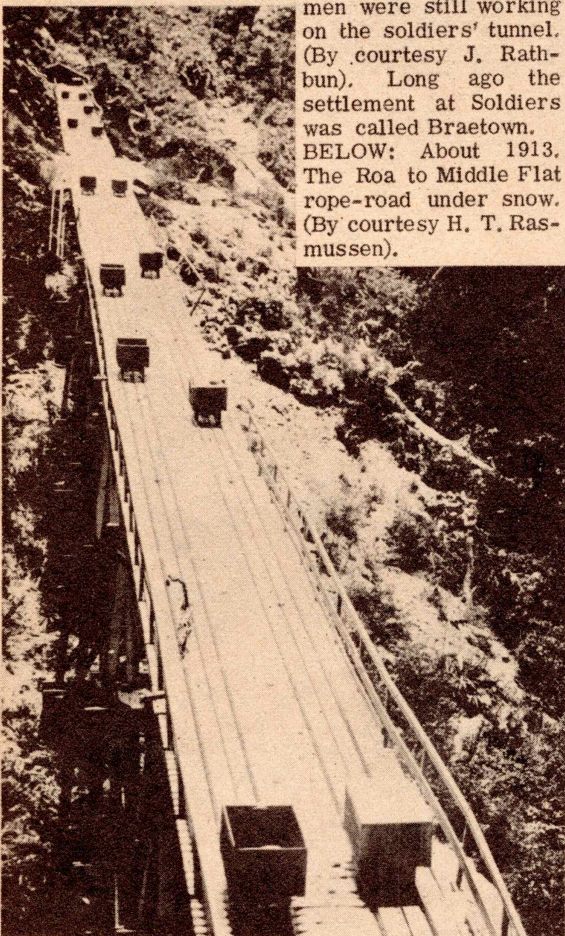
[illegible]

Blackball, like many other West Coast towns, started when gold was found. But that was 100 years ago. Did you know that in this modern age there is still a lot of gold to be won on the Coast? In fact, the **MARSDEN SLUICING & GOLD PANNING CO.** are organised to take you specially on a conducted trip to a real gold claim near Greymouth. Pan your own gold. See a hydraulic sluice at work. Enjoy a bush walk. Tell your friends to see **Mr. A. L. Sutherland, P.O. Box 208, Greymouth** — or phone **5243**, and take home gold.

ROA



ABOVE: High above Roa in October 1907. These men were still working on the soldiers' tunnel. (By courtesy J. Rathbun). Long ago the settlement at Soldiers was called Braetown. BELOW: About 1913. The Roa to Middle Flat rope-road under snow. (By courtesy H. T. Ras-mussen).



ABOVE: Part of the big viaduct with Middle Flat camp in the left background (By courtesy J. Rathbun).

LEFT: From Roa up to Middle Flat was a good pack track. Many men lived up top to build the viaducts, and tunnels, and open up the mine. These men needed supplies so they were packed in by chaps like Charlie Senior (at right).

RIGHT: Roa schoolchildren about 1914. They were mostly Cowmans (4) Taylors (5) Breens (3) Coopers (2) Austins (2), and Veitch (2). The little dark boy was Andrew Johnson. He lived at Soldiers, and walked down every day to Roa. He was joined at Middle Camp each day by Epp Donachie and others. (By courtesy Mrs E. Veitch).



LEFT: A group of Scottish immigrants safely housed at Middle Flat. See the snow against the building! (By courtesy Mrs J. Rathbun).

RIGHT: How many times did Charlie Senior pack supplies up and down the track to Middle Flat?

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ROA

RIGHT: At the bottom of the Rope road you could look back to the tunnel which took you on the way to Middle Flat. The Rope road isn't used today - but you can still see where it was. (By courtesy Mrs J. Rathbun). At the top end of the Rope road was a huge wheel, cast at the dispatch foundry, which was used as a water brake on the loaded coal trucks coming down.





ABOVE: Another photo from Mrs J. Rathbun's collection. This one was taken at the entrance to the Soldier's Tunnel in 1911.



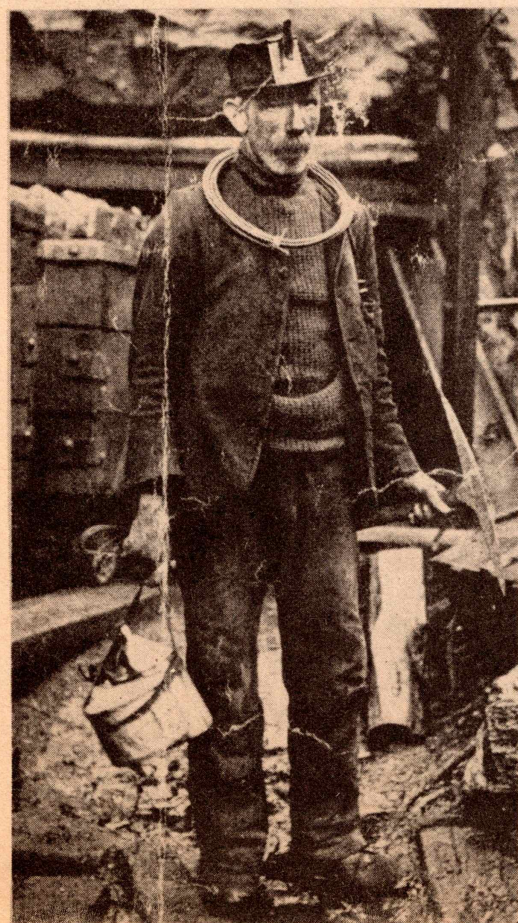
ABOVE: Mrs R. Willetts of Christchurch has supplied this old view of Roa when it was booming. See the huge bins and the railway, with its centre rail, winding down to Blackball.

RIGHT: Jack Muir, of Gladstone, worked on putting in the Rope road tunnels about 1910.



ABOVE: Mrs J. Williams and some of her family - also sister Daphne is there.

RIGHT: This Blackball 'coat-of-arms' could see many changes in the next 100 years - the miner's head could be replaced by that of a gold fossicker, and a tourist working beside him; in the background could be a tourist party on packhorses near Mt. Croesus. Who knows - at least the ingredients are there.



LEFT: Gummy Leitch, a well-known character of the 1910s. (By courtesy Mrs Mason).

BELOW: Gummy Leitch, junior, and Mrs Mason at the centennial banquet. RIGHT: All the way from Temuka came Abe and Ev Dillon and family. Abe worked at Roa 20 years ago, while Ev was the postie. - Just who whistled at who?

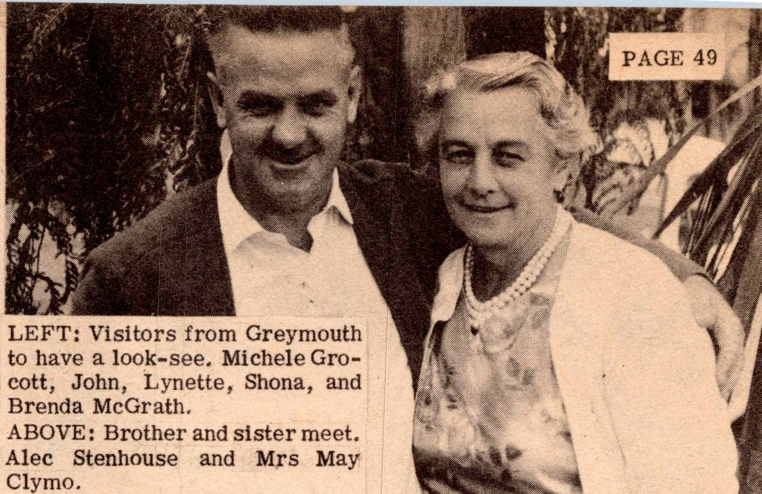




LEFT: Visitors from Greymouth to have a look-see. Michele Grocott, John, Lynette, Shona, and Brenda McGrath.

ABOVE: Brother and sister meet. Alec Stenhouse and Mrs May Clymo.

BELOW LEFT: All from one family, but now all living overseas. Mrs Bertie Baron (Wellington), Vic Neilson (Palm. North), Mrs Val Meyers (Sydney). Their father was an engine driver in Blackball mine workshops. RIGHT: Remember Tom Gilmer - worked in the Post Office and also drove a taxi (See page 17).



CONGRATULATIONS BLACKBALL

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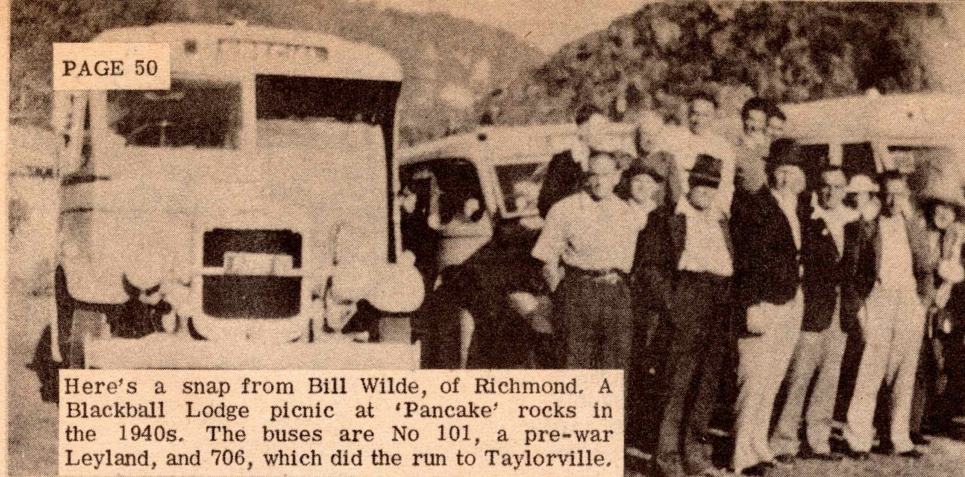
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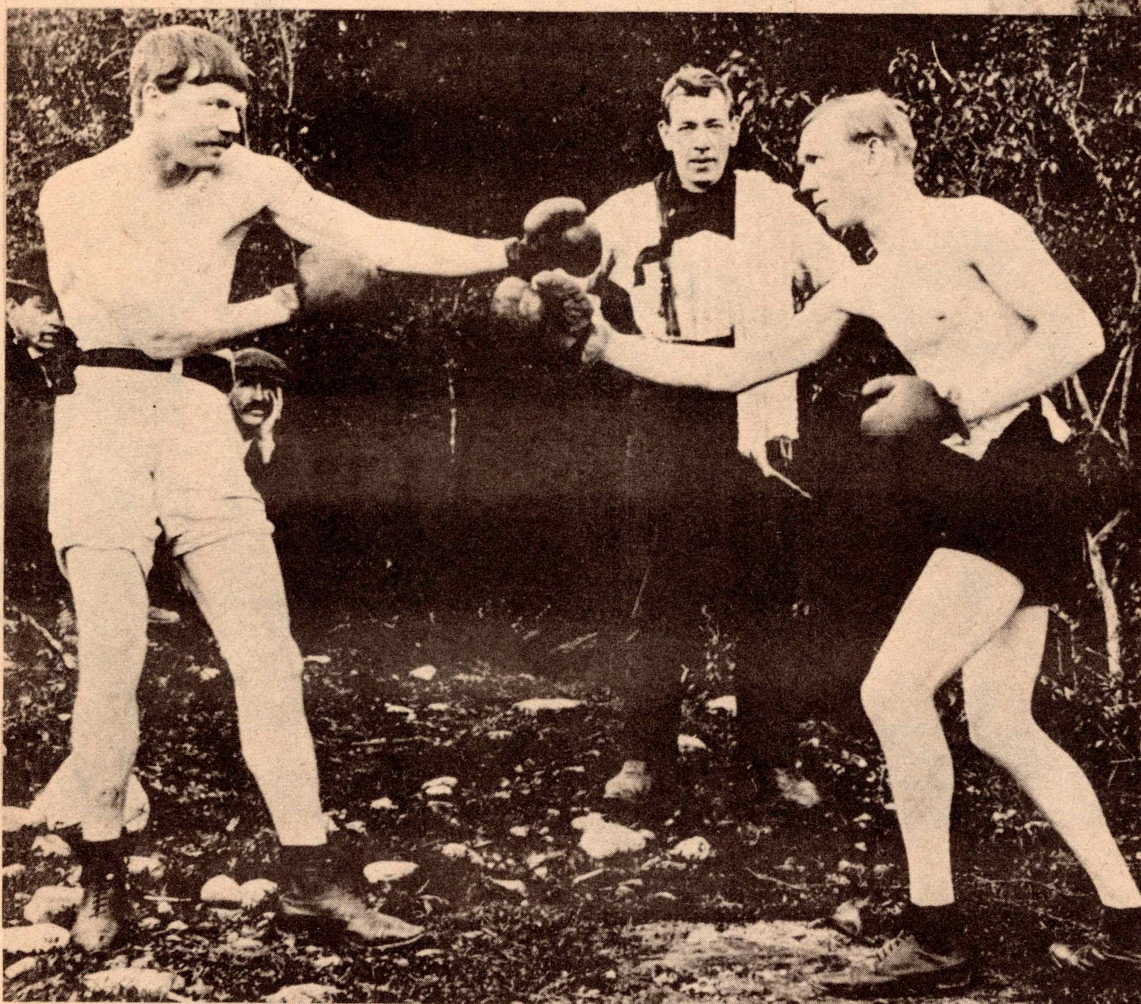
MACKAY ST., GREYMOUTH PHONE 7194



Here's a snap from Bill Wilde, of Richmond. A Blackball Lodge picnic at 'Pancake' rocks in the 1940s. The buses are No 101, a pre-war Leyland, and 706, which did the run to Taylorville.



ABOVE: At the centennial were Mr and Mrs T. Jackson, now of Feilding. Recently they celebrated 70 years of married life. They were joined in matrimony on September 8th, 1895, at the Grey Anglican Church by the Reverend Hart. They then lived at Blackball until 1918.



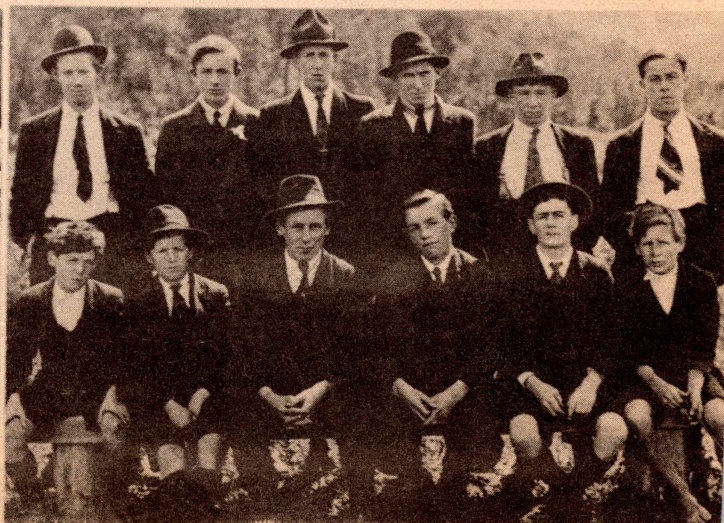
LEFT: An old boxing match at Blackball has been supplied by Mr J. Neilson. Big Jim Driscoll shapes up to Snowy Cruse.

BELOW: Queenie Rogers took this photo on 7th February 1919. BACK ROW: Allan Brown (who supplied the photo), Arthur Pember-ton, Bob Perry, Charlie White, Bummy Kerr, Ted White.

FRONT ROW: Cecil Gerraghty, Fern McMullen, Les Neilson, Harold James, Bas Ger-raghty, Jimmy Leitch.



ABOVE: H. J. Bailey of Kaiata supplied this snap of the Blackball baths in use at a swim carnival. Starters in 100 yds breaststroke are W. Clarke, J. Pope, Nick Peterson, R. Clark.





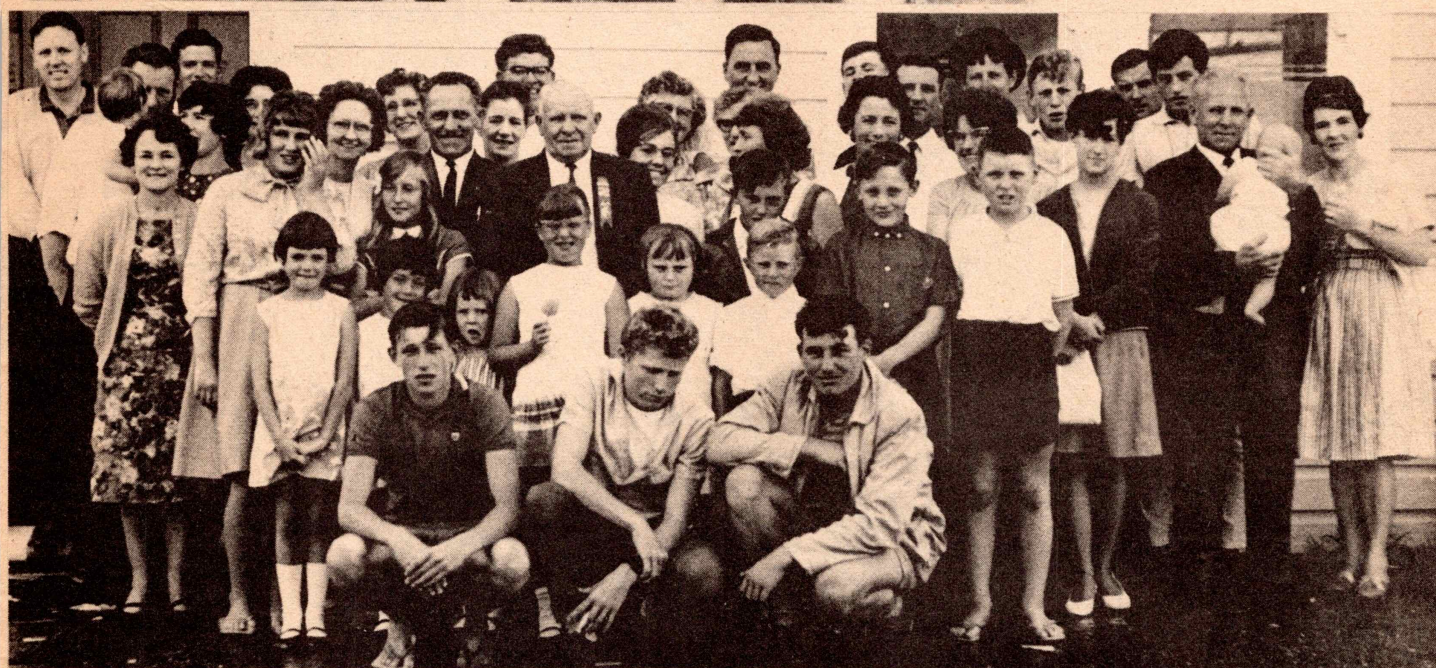
LEFT: From Tom Gilmer comes this snap taken about 40 years ago of a Blackball league team.

AT BACK: H. L. Neilson, Bob Perry.

MIDDLE ROW: Ginger Leitch, ?, Les Hudson, W. Kidd, Smacker McDonald, Talk McDonald, Doddsy Dodds.

FRONT ROW: Ted White, Jock Kerr, Ackie McDonald, Joe Meadowcroft, Dad Kerr, Bummy Kerr.

BELOW: They are not all here - but this is some of the Neilson family that gathered at Blackball.



WELL DONE, BLACKBALL!

Our family ties with the district extend back to the very early days and it gives us great pleasure to be associated with this issue marking the centenary of the Blackball District.

We offer our congratulations with the sincere wish that Blackball may again know the prosperity and happiness of past years.

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ABOVE: One of the greatest - Mame Watson. (By courtesy Mrs J. Rathbun).

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PROGRAMME

**Black Diamonds'
Frolics**

Produced by Mrs E. Taylor.

PART I.

- 1.—Overture **"THE AMERICAN PATROL"** The Orchestra
- 2.—Opening Chorus **"BEER BARREL POLKA"** The Company
- 3.—Solo **"MACUSH"**
- 4.—A Gipsy Scene **"RA"**
"RC"
"TE"

Dancing Girls: M. Haisty,
Gipsy: Mrs M. Collins.
Soloists: Mrs D. McArthur

and Song
McNeill, G. Hunter, R

ABOVE: Mrs Bill Wilde of Richmond has supplied this interesting programme from 1948. The following year the Blackball Amateur Musical and Dramatic Society produced 'Hi-Jinks'. Both these shows were under the expert hand of producer Liz Taylor - see photo at right of Liz taken during the banquet. These shows proved a big success on their West Coast tours.

But another production had been staged long before these two. In 1930 Mrs Dewhurst organised 'The Blackball Diggers'. About that time another organiser was continuing to do a service to the West Coast community which has almost gone un-noticed.

This was Mame Watson. Mame loved helping people - a party, a picnic, a stage show, a concert, a dance, or a kiddies' outing. Oh, yes, just leave it to Mame and everything would be all right. Mame is still loved by all who met her, or heard her sing, or play the piano, or the organ at church.

Here is an instance of an award for outstanding services gone begging - or is it not too late?



ABOVE: An old band photo about the end of World War I. (By courtesy Mrs F. Mason).
RIGHT: A group full of memories at the centennial. Bob Ware (postie 1924-32), Bone Neilson (used to M.C. for Mame Watson's dances), Bill Oliver.

Did you know that the first registered birth in Blackball was John Robert Dunn on 18th March, 1895?

Of course in the 1860s and 1870s, when there was no township, others were born in the area, like Mrs Gerraghty, but the records (if any) would not be around Blackball.



The Club Hotel is hard to beat,
For Ales, Gin and Rum,
So when in Blackball call around
To drink with Jackie Dunn.

THE CLUB HOTEL

PROGRAMME (Continued)

- 6.—Operatic Dance **"THELMA AND ALMA"**
 T. Kiely and A. Gillman
- 7.—Song Duo **"ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE"**
 Bob and Betty
R. Houston and Mrs E. Taylor.
- 8.—Ballet **"NARCISSI AND DAFFODIL"**
 Queen of Ballet: E. Street.
Other Dancers: J. Haisty, H. McDougall, W. Dillon, B. Galland,
L. Taylor, R. Collins.
- 9.—Solo **"AVE MARIA"** Mrs E. Taylor
- 10.—Song and Chorus **"WHERE DID YOU GET THAT HAT"**
 Solo: J. Meikle.
Girls of Chorus: Joan Hurley, Joyce Hurley, M. McFadyen,
E. Coleman, T. Kiely, A. Gillman, N. Collins, E. Hayes.
Men: A. McClure, L. Taylor, J. Haisty, B. Galland, W. Collins,
R. Houston, J. Becker, G. Dillon, W. McNeill.

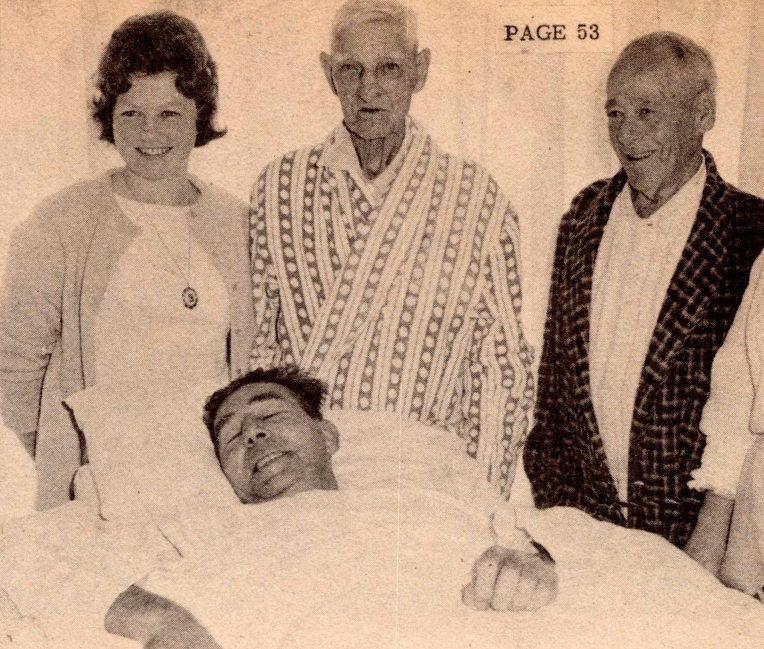
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Men's Wear Goods — Footwear

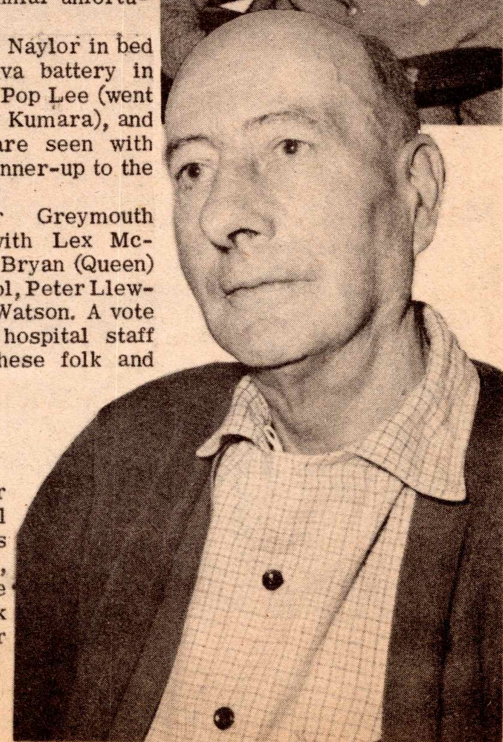


They couldn't get along to the start of the centennial unfortunately.

TOP PHOTO: Stan Naylor in bed (worked at Minerva battery in depression days), Pop Lee (went to Blackball from Kumara), and Charlie Senior, are seen with Lex McDonald (runner-up to the Centennial Queen).

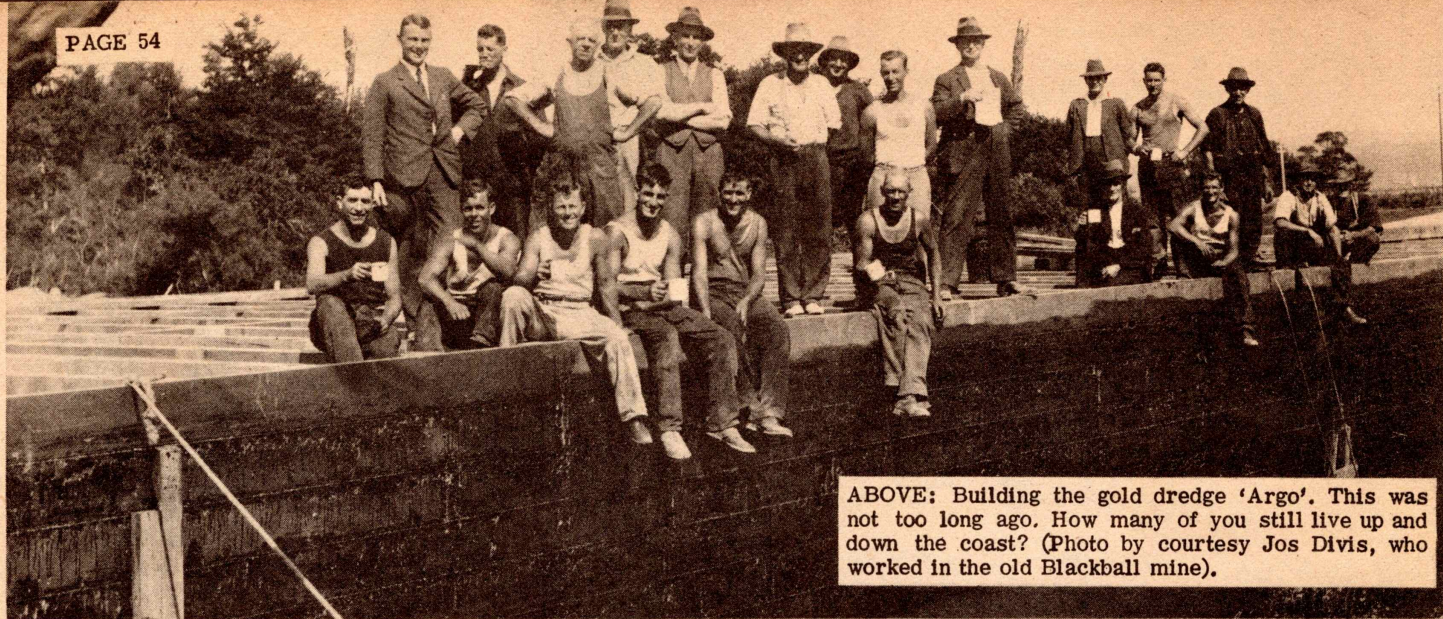
ABOVE: Another Greymouth Hospital group with Lex McDonald and Mary Bryan (Queen) are Jimmy McNicol, Peter Llewellyn, and Mame Watson. A vote of thanks to the hospital staff for caring for these folk and many others.

RIGHT: Once a familiar face at the Blackball shop — Jack Haisty. His grand-dad, Sam Haisty, started at Notown in the early gold days — Jack even has a photo of their old Notown Hotel.

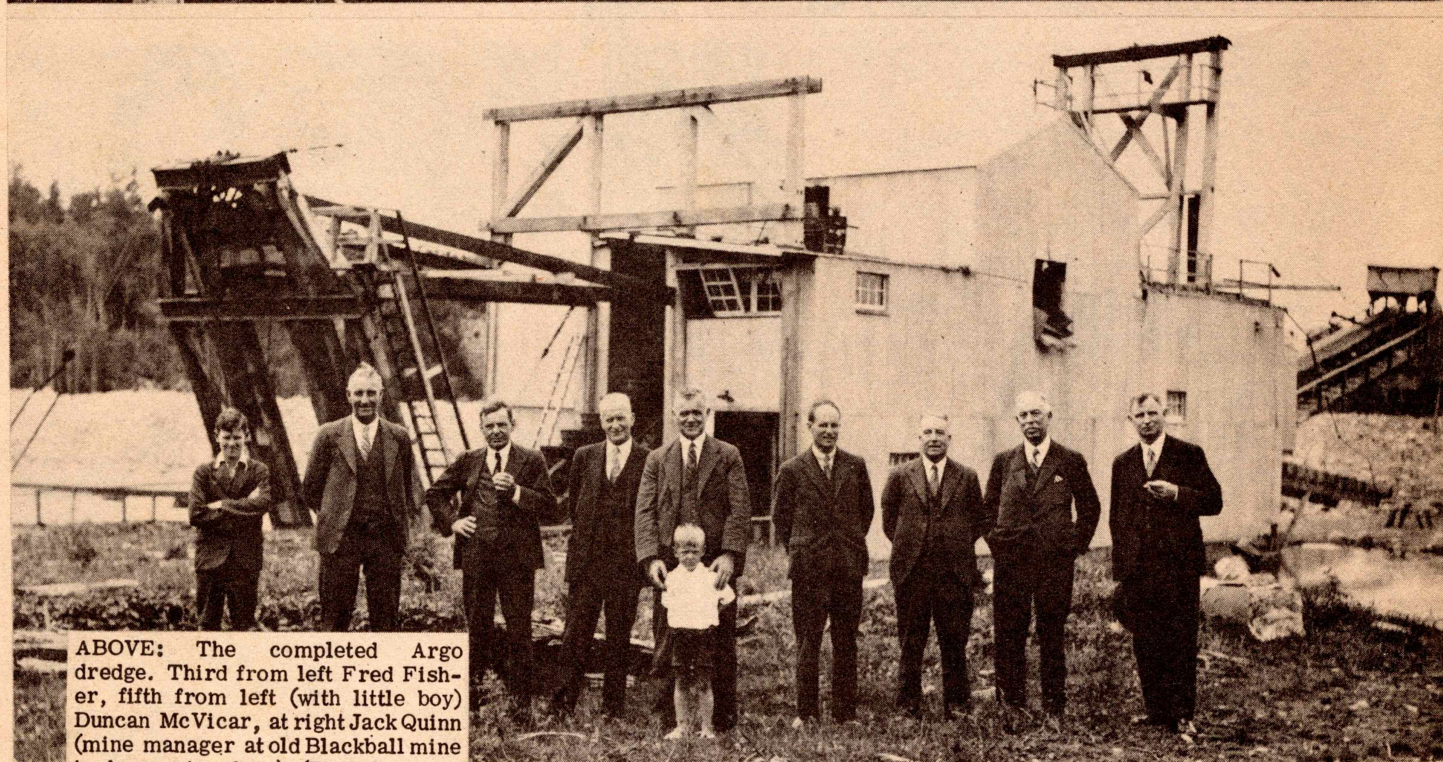


Did you know that many years ago Bill McTaggart (Tagg) assembled a Chevrolet 4 cylinder car for Armstrong & Haisty Blackball? Tagg worked on the parts straight out of the big car cases — the car was assembled in the garage opposite the shop.





ABOVE: Building the gold dredge 'Argo'. This was not too long ago. How many of you still live up and down the coast? (Photo by courtesy Jos Divis, who worked in the old Blackball mine).



ABOVE: The completed Argo dredge. Third from left Fred Fisher, fifth from left (with little boy) Duncan McVicar, at right Jack Quinn (mine manager at old Blackball mine in depression days). (Photo by courtesy Jos Divis).

BELOW: The same creeks that hid the gold and kept dredges like the Argo going, now keep young swimmers going. Blackball has several good safe swimming holes.



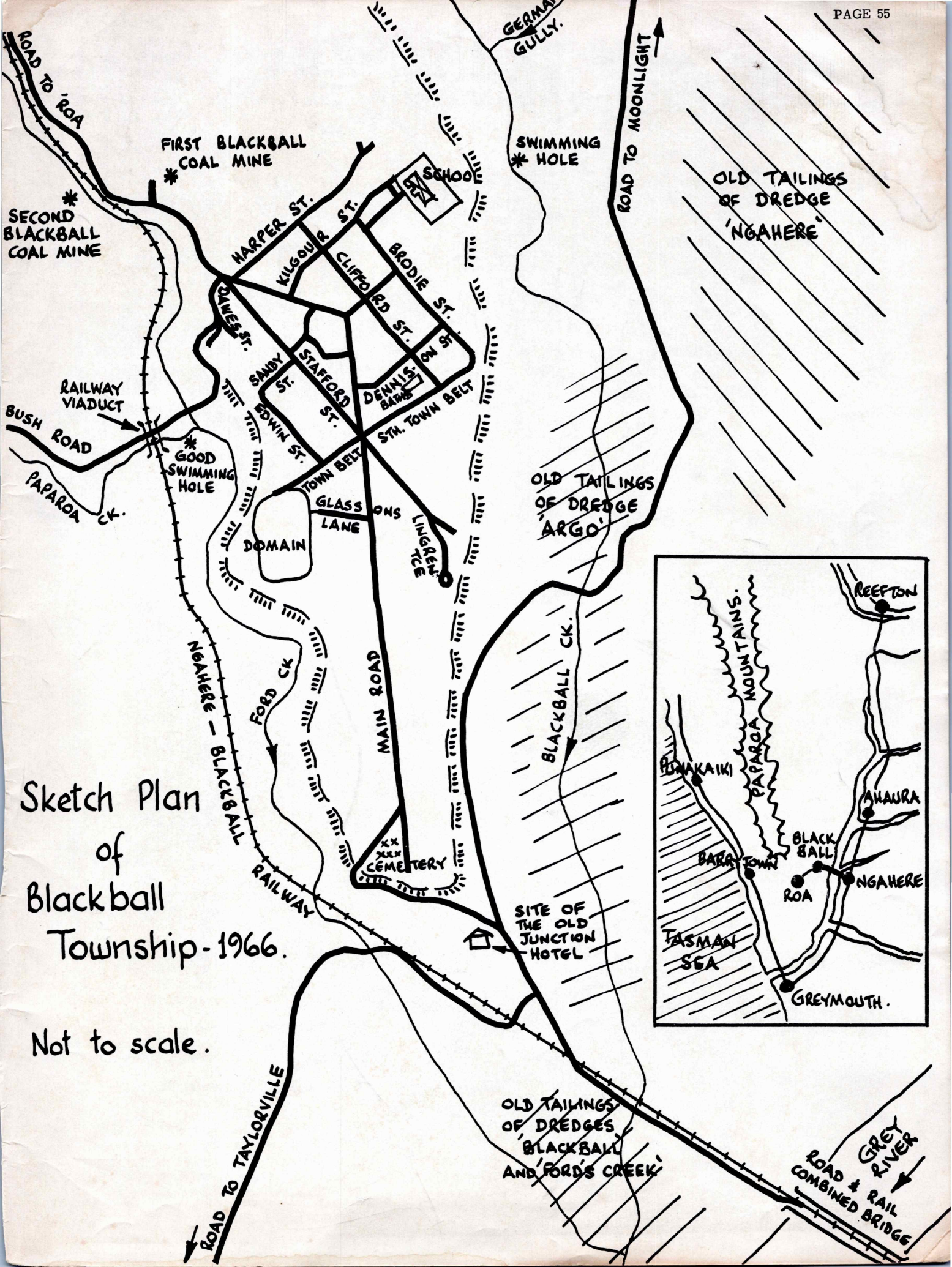
Writes Allan Brown:

'Yes, when I was 15 years of age I used to go to Roa and Middle Camp on a pack-horse, and I served your people with meat. We were the butchers in Blackball at the time. I would have a sack of meat each side of the saddle and a basketful on my knee. I used to ride to their front gates and call out "Butcher". No cars in those days, but good days they were.'

Remember the names of the early coach drivers like Fatty Rhodes, Bob Crawford, Bill Allen, Jack Muir, Ernie Hayes.

Still living in Christchurch is Mr A. J. Wicks an early Blackball teacher.

Half way from Blackball to Taylorville, along the Brunner Track, is a lovely picnic spot with now-wild apple trees. Tim O'Brien once lived there, and used to walk to Ngahere and back for supplies.



Centennial Of Blackball

Out of the black depths of Roa mine comes the coal. Out into the bright morning sunlight and a view that is hard to beat. Look across the state sawmill at the foot of the Roa hill; look across fog-covered Blackball. Look hard, look long, and look into the future if possible — tomorrow may see a new Blackball rise.

